THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

VOLUME TWENTY-FOUR

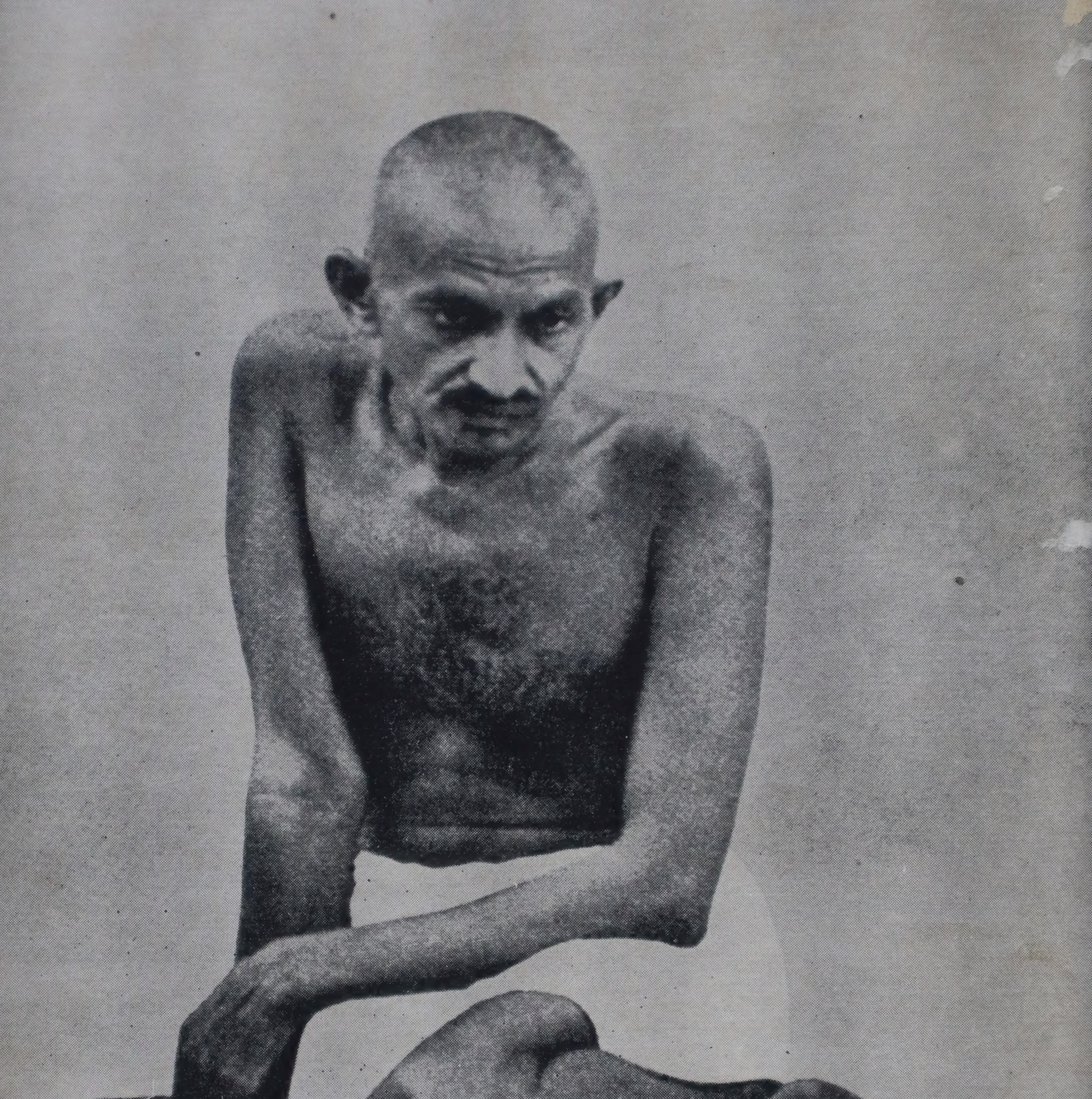


THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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MAHATMA GANDHI

XXIV

(May - August 1924)



IN 1924

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PREFACE

This volume, which covers the period from May 8, 1924 to August 15, 1924, records Gandhiji's effort to restore purpose and discipline to the National movement and the temporary failure of that effort. During his absence in jail from March 1922 to February 1924, the movement seemed to have drifted away from the basic principles of the Non-co-operation programme. For nearly three months after his release, Gandhiji studied the situation in the country from Juhu, in Bombay, where he was resting, and deliberated with other leaders on the two main issues of the day, Council-entry and Hindu-Muslim tension. Having formed his opinions, he expressed them towards the end of May ("Statement to Associated Press of India," pp. 109-11, and "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure," pp. 136-54), and put forward concrete proposals for making the Congress a better knit and more effective organization. In expressing his views, Gandhiji sincerely tried to be fair to every side, but probably the very frankness with which he tried to put the truth as he saw it before the country provoked some opposition.

Gandhiji's difference with the Swaraj Party, led by Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das, was one of fundamental principle. Permitted by the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions of the Congress, its members had entered the Councils while Gandhiji was in jail, and their action seemed to Gandhiji a violation of the very basis of the Non-co-operation programme accepted by the Congress in 1920. Whereas that programme was intended, through constructive activities and by adherence to truth and non-violence, to generate sufficient internal strength in the country to compel the British to hand over power, the Swarajist programme of obstruction from within the Councils aimed purely at exerting pressure on the Government and ultimately relied upon British public opinion for securing the freedom of the country. By concentrating attention on agitation against the Government, it diverted people's minds, Gandhiji felt, from the constructive programme and the task of bringing about a regeneration of national life through it. While, however, he disapproved of the Swarajist programme, as a realist Gandhiji recognized that Council-entry was a settled fact and tried to come to terms with the Swarajists and devise a compromise which would enable the Congress to function as a

homogeneous organization. He, therefore, adopted an attitude of complete neutrality to the Swaraj Party, but sought to put the Congress under the executive control of those who believed in devoting the energies and resources of the organization exclusively to the constructive programme. With this aim in view, he gave notice of certain resolutions which he proposed to move at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad at the end of June. The effect of these resolutions would be to exclude members of the Swaraj Party from the representative and executive organs of the Congress. Gandhiji's aim was not merely to introduce homogeneity in these bodies, but to ensure vigorous prosecution of the constructive programme. His proposals, therefore, were intended to ensure "that appearance corresponded with reality". The main proposal was that every member of the Congress elected to a representative or executive body of the organization should spin for at least half an hour daily and send every month to the All-India Khadi Board a fixed quantity of well-spun, even yarn. This would make the Congress a truly mass organization by requiring its active members to identify themselves with the economic distress in the country. The resolution was adopted by the All-India Congress Committee by a small majority, but Gandhiji felt the strength of the opposition from members of the Swaraj Party and himself proposed a modification whereby the penalty clause was dropped. On the other resolutions, too, there was powerful opposition and two of them were amended to meet the point of view of the Swarajists.

These resolutions were, as he explained, Gandhiji's terms for resuming leadership of the national movement. "All the four resolutions then constitute my application for employment as general and lay down my qualifications and limitations" (p. 2 6). But the outcome of the deliberations at the A.I.C.C. meeting made him pause and think. "Though, on all of the four resolutions I had the honour of moving, I had a majority in their favour, I must own that, according to my conception, I was defeated. The proceedings have been an eye-opener to me and I am now occupied in a diligent search from within" (p. 332). Gandhiji wondered whether he was doing right in co-operating with those who disagreed with his fundamental principles. "I kept asking myself, 'Could right ever come out of wrong? Was I not co-operating with evil?'" His anguish is evident from this confession: "It takes much to make me weep. I try to suppress tears even when there is occasion for them. But, in spite of all my efforts to be brave, I broke down utterly" (p. 337). It was not the oppo-

sition to his resolutions so much as the lack of seriousness in the proceedings which so strongly moved Gandhiji.

Though "defeated and humbled", Gandhiji strove to find a method of working in harmony, if not co-operation, with the Swarajists. He did not want them to retire from the Councils against their conviction, merely through fear of public opinion. Writing to Motilal Nehru on August 9, 1924, he said: " . . . I was prepared to facilitate your securing the Congress machinery, actually assisting you to do so. . . . Short of my coming into your programme, I would like to place myself at your disposal" (p. 536). In a second letter, on August 15, he explained that he did not "want to be mixed up with the Councils' programme". With him in the Congress, this programme should be out of it. Or if the Swarajists were to take it up in the Congress, he himself should be practically out of it. He would gladly occupy the place he did during 1915-18. His purpose was not to weaken the power of the Swarajists, nor certainly to embarrass them (p. 578). He was afraid that the inconclusive struggle between the No-changers, those who advocated scrupulous adherence to the original Congress resolution on Non-co-operation, and the Swarajists at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Ahmedabad would be resumed at the annual session of the Congress in December. "The more I think of it, the more my soul rises against a battle for power at Belgaum" (p. 578). He pleaded with the No-changers to surrender control of the executive bodies to the Swarajists, wherever necessary, to avoid bitter fighting in the Congress and advised them to concentrate their energies on constructive work, especially on propagation of khadi (pp. 471-3).

Gandhiji himself took every opportunity, in *Young India* and *Navajivan*, to exhort readers to take up spinning, and gave detailed publicity to the khadi work being done in different parts of the country. He proposed spinning as full-time employment even for prisoners. Addressing students and teachers of national schools on several occasions, he urged them to give more and more of their time to khadi work, and suggested that spinning should be introduced as a compulsory activity in national schools. In a series of speeches at the National Schools' Conference at Ahmedabad, in the first week of August, he set down at length his views on national education and the role of teachers.

Hindu-Muslim tension was another problem which weighed heavily on Gandhiji's mind at this time. During the heyday of the Non-co-operation movement in 1921, the two communities were almost within sight of achieving real unity, but, after the

deposition of the Khalifa, the bond of common interest provided by the Khilafat agitation weakened and, during the two years of Gandhiji's imprisonment, distrust grew up between the leaders of the two communities. There were riots in several parts of the country. Gandhiji analysed the causes of the rift in "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure" (pp. 136-54). As he explained, behind the tangible, local causes for the conflicts was the spirit of violence which had grown in the country in revulsion against the half-hearted acceptance of non-violence as a policy during the Non-co-operation movement. In *Young India*, 5-6-1924, he summarized the long statement on "the greatest of all questions for the Indian patriot" (pp. 188-90). Gandhiji's efforts served however only to provoke angry protests from both camps. Health permitting, he planned with the Ali Brothers to tour the country to restore harmony between the two communities, but the plan did not materialize. Helpless to improve the prevailing atmosphere, Gandhiji was led later to undertake a self-purificatory fast of 21 days in Delhi.

A local issue of some importance to which Gandhiji gave considerable attention was the satyagraha in Vaikom, in the Travancore State, where reformers had started a movement to secure to the untouchable communities the right to use a public road leading to a Hindu temple. The cause was dear to Gandhiji and he readily lent it his moral support, guiding the campaign from a distance from week to week. He was anxious that it should remain a local movement and an affair exclusively of Hindus, and also that the means employed should be strictly consistent with the basic principles of satyagraha, that is, of voluntary suffering aimed at bringing about a change of heart in the opponents. He felt that, judged from this stand-point, the satyagraha in Vaikom was "crossing the limits" (p. 7), and publicly disapproved of some of its features. The issues are discussed at some length in "Interview to Vaikom Deputation" (pp. 90-4). He counselled patience and moderation to the reformers so as not to alienate the orthodox Hindus in the State and elsewhere. Gandhiji, likewise, urged public workers in Kathiawar to exercise self-restraint in organizing political activities in the Indian States of their region. He pointed out that the evils of these States were the results of the British system, and that their subjects could not undertake the burden of freeing the Princes from the control of the British Government unless the latter themselves desired such freedom. At the same time, he held that there could be no satyagraha in the Princely States in order to win swaraj for India (p. 246). He advised the proposed Kathiawar

Political Conference to concentrate its efforts on improving the relationship between the Rulers and their subjects and promoting the economic, political and moral progress of the latter. This remained till the last Gandhiji's attitude to the problems of Indian States.

Among the contents of this volume is the series: "My Jail Experiences". Gandhiji discussed in some of them important issues of jail reform, like the need for a scientific classification of prisoners based on humanitarian considerations and the possibility of making the jails economically self-supporting by employing the prisoners on the right kind of work. The story of Gandhiji's efforts to persuade the Government to let him see the Mulshi Peta prisoners and plead with them, to change their attitude to jail discipline, is a little drama, with a happy end, on the application of the method of satyagraha. Major Jones, the Jail Superintendent, admitted that "this was the cleanest hunger-strike he had witnessed" (p. 98).

But more interesting still are the lively sketches of the convict-officers who were successively appointed to watch over Gandhiji and his companions in jail. The enthusiasm with which these portraits are drawn is enough to show that Gandhiji's human relations with men in authority playing their roles were "uniformly happy".

An article in *Navajivan* in a refreshingly personal strain reveals the nature of the religious feeling which filled his inner being. In "Lack or Excess of Love?" (pp. 196-8), he answered the objections of a pious correspondent. Though Gandhiji often asserted that God was Truth, and later, that Truth was God, and based his ethical principles on this abstract concept of God, his own inner life was informed with the sentiment of personal *bhakti* which he had imbibed from the *Vaishnava* atmosphere in which he had grown up as a child. Rama was his *ishta devata*, the chosen form of godhead, to whom he had surrendered himself in love. "Rama has now come into my home. I know that He would frown on me if I spoke to Him as 'Yuu'. To me—an orphan without mother, father, brother—Rama is all in all. . . . My life is His. In Him I live. . . . In the *Bhangi* and the Brahmin I see the same Rama and to them both I bow" (p. 197). Though, as a rational being, Gandhiji believed and said that Rama and Khuda and God signified the same Essence, his heart responded most naturally to his beloved Rama and he never tired of writing about the magic of His Name.

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication except where they carry a date line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the August 1958 edition. References to *An Autobiography* cite only the Part and Chapter, in view of the varying pagination in different editions.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to those available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For research and reference facilities, we owe thanks to the All-India Congress Committee Library, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, the Research and Reference Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi; the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya and the Gujarat Vidyapith Granthalaya, Ahmedabad; and Shri Pyarelal Nayyar, New Delhi; and for assistance in photo-printing documents to the Photo Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi.

CONTENTS

1. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES – IV*[1]

'Political' Prisoners

"We do not make any distinction between political and other prisoners. Surely you do not want any such distinction to be made in your favour?" Thus said Sir George Lloyd[2] when he visited the Yeravda Jail about the end of the last year. He said that in reply to an inadvertent use made by me of the adjective 'political'. I ought to have known better. For I was fully aware of the Governor's distaste for that word. And yet, strange to say, the history tickets of most of us were marked 'political'. When I remarked upon the anomaly, I was told by the then Superintendent that the distinction was private and was intended only for the guidance of the authorities. We, the prisoners, were to ignore it, for we could not base any claim upon it.

I have reproduced Sir George Lloyd's language word for word so far as I can remember. There is a sting about what Sir George Lloyd said. And it was so gratuitous. For he knew that I was asking for no favours and no distinction. Circumstances had[3] brought about a general discussion. But the idea was to tell me, "You are no better than the rest in the eye of the law and the administration." And yet the painful inconsistency was that the very time that the distinction was, without any occasion for it, combated in theory, it was made in practice. Only, in the majority of cases, it was made against the political prisoners.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible to avoid making distinctions. If the human factor were not ignored, it would be necessary to understand a prisoner's habits of life, and model his life accordingly in the prisons. It is not a question of distinguishing between rich men and poor men or educated and uneducated, but between modes of life these antecedents have developed in them. As against the inevitable recognition of the existing fact, it has been urged that the men who commit crimes should know that the law is no respecter of persons, and that it is the same to the law whether a rich man or a graduate or a labourer commits theft. This is a perversion of a sound law. If it is really the same to the law as it

[1] For the first three articles of this series, *vide* Vol. XXIII.

[2] Governor of Bombay; for Gandhiji's letter to him regarding prisoner classification, *vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 173-4.

[3] The source has "has".

should be, each will get the treatment according to his capacity for suffering. To give thirty stripes to a delicately-built thief and as many to an able-bodied one would be not impartiality but vindictiveness towards the delicate one and probably indulgence to the able-bodied. Similarly to expect, say, Pandit Motilalji[1] to sleep on a rough coir-mat spread on hard floor is additional punishment, not equality of treatment.

If the human factor was introduced into the administration of the jails, the ceremony on admission would be different from what it is today. Finger-impressions would undoubtedly be taken, a record of past offences would find its place in the register. But there will be, in addition, particulars about the prisoner's habits and mode of life. Not distinction but classification is perhaps the word that better describes the necessary method which the authorities, if they would treat prisoners as human beings, must recognize. Some kind of classification there already is. For instance, there are circles wherein prisoners are housed in batches in long cells. Then there are the separate single cells intended for dangerous criminals. There are solitary cells where prisoners undergoing solitary confinement are locked. There are, again, the condemned cells in which are locked prisoners awaiting the gallows. Lastly, there are cells for under-trial prisoners. The reader will be surprised to find that political prisoners were mostly confined in the separate division or the solitary. In some cases, they were confined in condemned cells. Let me not do an injustice to the authorities. Those who do not know these divisions and cells may form the impression that the condemned cells, for instance, must be specially bad. Such, however, is not the case. The cells are all well-constructed and airy so far as Yeravda Jail is concerned. What is, however, open to strong objection is the association about these cells.

The classification being, as I have shown, inevitable and in existence, there is no reason why it should not be scientific and human. I know that revision of classification according to my suggestion means a revolution in the whole system. It undoubtedly means more expense and a different type of men to work the new system. But additional expense will mean economy in the long run. The greatest advantage of the proposed revolution would no doubt be a reduction in the crimes and reformation of the prisoners. The jails would then be reformatories representing to society sinners as its reformed and respectable members. This may be

[1] Motilal Nehru (1861-1931); prominent lawyer and Swarajist leader; President, Indian National Congress, 1919 and 1928

a far-off event. If we were not under the spell of a long-lived custom, we should not find it a difficult task to turn our prisons into reformatories.

Let me quote here a pregnant remark made by one of the jailors. He once said:

> When I admit search or report prisoners, I often ask myself whether I am a better man than most of them. God knows I have been guilty of worse crimes than what some have come here for. The difference is that these poor men have been detected whereas I am not.

Is not what the good jailor confessed true of many of us? Is it not true that there are more undetected than detected crimes? Society does not point the finger of scorn at them. But habit has made us look askance at those who are not smart enough to escape detection. Imprisonment often makes them hardened criminals.

The animal treatment commences on arrest. The accused are in theory assumed to be innocent unless they are found guilty. In practice the demeanour of those in charge of them is one of haughtiness and contempt. A convicted man is lost to society. The atmosphere in the prison inures him to the position of inferiority.

The political prisoners do not as a rule succumb to this debilitating atmosphere, because they, instead of responding to the depressing atmosphere, act against it and, therefore, even refine it to a certain extent. Society, too, refuses to regard them as criminals. On the contrary, they become heroes and martyrs. Their sufferings in the jail are exaggerated by the public. And such indulgence in many cases even demoralizes the political prisoners. But unfortunately, exactly in proportion to the indulgence of the public, is the strictness, mostly unwarranted, of the officials. The Government regard the political prisoners as more dangerous to society than the ordinary prisoner. An official seriously contended that a political prisoner's crime placed the whole society in danger whereas an ordinary crime harmed only the criminal.

Another official told me that the reason why the political prisoners were isolated and denied newspapers, magazines, etc., was to bring the guilt home to them. Political prisoners, he said, seemed to glory in 'imprisonment'. The deprivation of the liberty, while it afflicted the ordinary criminal, left the political prisoner unmoved. It was, therefore, he added, but natural that the Government should devise some other method of punishment; hence, he said, the denial of facilities which otherwise such prisoners should undoubtedly have. The remarks were made in connectiuo

with my request for *The Times of India* weekly, or the *Indian Social Reformer*, or the *Servant of India* or *Modern Review* or *Indian Review*. Let the reader not regard this deprivation as a light penalty for those who regard the newspaper as a necessity in no way inferior to breakfast. I dare say that Mr. Majli would not have suffered mental derangement if he had been allowed the use of newspapers.[1] It is equally depressing for one who is not, like me, a reformer for all occasions, to be put up together with dangerous criminals as almost all the political prisoners were put in Yeravda. It is no light thing to be in the company of those who never speak but to utter foul language or whose conversation is as a rule indecent. I could understand political prisoners being put in such surroundings, if the Government sanely took them in their confidence and used them to exercise a wholesome influence on the ordinary criminal. This however is, I admit, not a practical proposition. My contention is that placing of political prisoners in unwholesome surroundings is an additional and an unwarranted punishment. They ought to be put in a separate division and given a treatment in keeping with their antecedents.

I hope civil resisters will not misunderstand this or any other chapter in which I have advocated reforms of prisons. It would ill become a civil resister to resent whatever inconvenience he may be subjected to. He is out to put up with the roughest treatment. If the treatment is humane, it is well; but it is also well if it be otherwise.

Young India, 8-5-1924

2. *NOTES*

THE LATE MRS. RAMABAI RANADE

The death of Ramabai Ranade[2] is a great national loss. She was the embodiment of all that a Hindu widow could be. She was a true friend and helpmate to her illustrious husband in his lifetime. After his death she chose as her life-work one of her husband's activities. Mr. Ranade[3] was a reformer and deeply interested in the uplift of Indian womanhood. Ramabai therefore threw herself heart and soul into the Sevasadan. She concentrated her whole energy upon it. The result is that the Sevasadan has

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 345-6.
[2] 1862-1924; wife of Mahadev Govind Ranade
[3] 1842-1901; eminent judge, and a founder of Indian National Congress

become an institution without a second of its kind throughout all India. It educates nearly one thousand girls and women. Col. Maddock[1] told me that it was his hospital that turned out the best and the largest number of Indian nurses. All these sisters belong to the Sevasadan. No doubt, Ramabai had in Mr. Devdhar[2] a worker of tireless energy and great capacity for detail. But it only enhances Ramabai's merit that she had capable and devoted co-workers. The Sevasadan will always remain a living monument to her sacred memory. I tender my humble sympathy to the deceased sister's family and her many children of the Sevasadan.

Principal Gidwani[3]

Mrs. Gidwani in the course of a letter in reply to my inquiry, writes:

> When I went to see him some time ago, I noticed that the authorities were behaving roughly towards my husband. He was locked. His clothes were dirty. He looked much reduced, as he had fasted for seven days. Formerly, when at the time of Chauri Chaura he fasted, he was not so much reduced. He receives the same food as the other prisoners. All kinds of difficulties are placed in the way of visitors. His brother has written twice about visiting, but has had no satisfaction. But I do not worry. Man climbs only through difficulties.

This is a pathetic letter from a woman passionately devoted to her husband. Mrs. Gidwani's letter is not intended for publication. The letter is a domestic letter written to a common friend whom I had asked to inquire of Mrs. Gidwani as to the condition of her husband. If the facts are as stated by Mrs. Gidwani, they do no credit to the present administration in Nabha. Principal Gidwani is evidently being treated as a common felon although he has not been tried. He entered the State boundary, as Mr. Zimand has stated, purely in the cause of humanity. I invite the Nabha administration to deny or explain the foregoing statement and I promise to give the same publicity to their explanation as I have given to Mrs. Gidwani's statement.

[1] Surgeon-General at Sassoon Hospital, Poona, who operated upon Gandhiji for appendicitis in January 1924

[2] G. K. Devdhar; member, later president, of the Servants of India Society

[3] A. T. Gidwani; Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad

Journalistic Language

A friend writes:

> Have you read the *Chronicle* leader "Address to Mahatma"? The writer says therein: "The opposition, if we may take the report or the speeches made by two or three opposers as an indication, was for opposition's sake and was confined to the professionally cantankerous and those whose blood has turned to venom in their veins through jealousy of the success of the Mahatma's movement." When the *Times* writes about Mr. Mohamed Ali, you lecture to it. Have you nothing to say to the *Chronicle* which claims to be your follower and which uses unrestrained and untruthful language towards political opponents?

I am unaware of having 'lectured' to the *Times*. I would not have the courage, even if I was so minded. The writer evidently refers to my remarks about the campaign of calumny that is at present going on in certain vernacular journals. As it so happened, I read the translated extracts in *The Times of India* columns and was obliged to refer to it. But the advice I tendered was, as the writer may verify for himself, not to *The Times of India* but to the vernacular journals in question. But though I disclaim the charge of having 'lectured' to the *Times*, I am prepared to say that the writer in the *Chronicle* should have, consistently with his profession of non-violent non-co-operation, avoided the imputations against the opposers of the address. I must confess to my correspondent that I have not read the article he refers to. As a rule, I do not read writings in the Indian Press about me, whether they are laudatory or condemnatory. Praise I do not need, as I am sufficiently proud of myself without outside help. Condemnation I refrain from reading, lest the Hyde in me get the better of the Jekyll and do violence to my non-violence. My remarks about the *Chronicle* writing are subject to such correction as may be provided by a reading of the whole article. I presume, however, that the remarks refer to Messrs J. B. Petit[1] and Kanji Dwarkadas[2]. I have the honour to know both of them well. The relations between us are as friendly as they were before the birth of non-co-operation. I cannot conceive it possible for either of them to have venom against me. They frankly dislike my ways. They at least will not oppose for opposition's sake. What I have heard from those who voted for the address is that Mr. Petit spoke with, for him, amazing restraint. I know he can let himself go when he wishes to. But he realized

[1] Parsi philanthropist of Bombay

[2] Leading member of the Home Rule League and Gandhiji's friend

that he had a painful duty to perform as it was in connection with a friend. As an old member of the Corporation, he felt that the Corporation was departing from its traditions in voting an address to a person whose amiable virtues could not be isolated from his (to Mr. Petit) abominable politics. In my humble opinion Messrs Petit and Kanji were justified in registering their opposition against what they honestly held was a wrong step being taken by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. There is undoubtedly too much imputing of motives in our public life at the present moment. No Swarajist (let alone the co-operators) is safe from imputations by No-changers. The latter are equally roughly handled by the Swarajists. And the Liberals by both. Why should men who were supposed to be honest before suddenly become dishonest on changing their political colour? Non-co-operators have special reason for caution because they have changed, not their opponents. It cannot be the latter's fault if they do not see eye to eye with us. I would therefore transfer all my wrath against the views rather than against their holders.

Vaikom Satyagraha

The Vaikom satyagraha is, I fear, crossing the limits. I do hope that the Sikh free kitchen will be withdrawn and that the movement will be confined to Hindus only. Its inclusion in the Congress programme no more makes it a movement of Hindus and non-Hindus than the Khilafat became a Muslim and non-Muslim movement by reason of its inclusion in the Congress programme. Moreover, the opponents of the Khilafat movement were non-Muslims represented by the British Government. It would be an intrusion, which Mussalmans would rightly regard as impertinent, if Hindus or other non-Muslims interfered in an intra-communal[1] religious dispute among themselves. Similarly would orthodox Hindus resent interference by others in what is purely Hindu reform. The Hindu reformers of Malabar will estrange the entire Hindu sympathy if they accept or encourage non-Hindu interference or assistance beyond sympathy. I am sure that the Hindu reformers who are leading the movement in Vaikom do not want to convert their orthodox brethren by compulsion. In any case, let them recognize the boundary line which a satyagrahi must not cross. I respectfully urge the reformers not to overawe the orthodox. I dissent from the view that once the disputed road to Vaikom is free, the problem of untouchability is solved even in Malabar. Victory in Vaikom, if non-violent, will no doubt shake

[1] The source has "inter-communal".

the citadel of sacerdotal superstition in general, but the problem will have to be everywhere locally tackled wherever it arises. Because a well in one place in Gujarat is thrown open for the use of the untouchables, it does not follow that all the wells in Gujarat will be opened for their use. And how would it fare with Hinduism if the Christian, the Muslim, the Akali, and other non-Hindu friends of the Hindu reformers made a demonstration against the orthodox Hindus, financed the reformers and finally overawed the orthodox into subjection? Will that be satyagraha, will submission then be voluntary, will it be reform in Hinduism?

Young India, 8-5-1924

3. *TO CORRESPONDENTS*[1]

My correspondents are daily increasing in number. I mean both those who write to me as editor and those who write and seek advice on public matters. I assure them that I read the correspondence as much as I can, and deal with it in these columns to the extent of my ability. But I confess my inability to deal exhaustively with all the important matters discussed by my correspondents. Nor is it possible for me to answer them all separately. *Young India* they will kindly regard as a personal letter to them. Correspondence, if it is to command attention, must be brief, legible and impersonal.

Young India, 8-5-1924

4. *A HEART SEARCHER*

It is with pleasure mingled with pain that I give the following letter from an esteemed correspondent:

> The recent article in *Young India* has removed most of my doubts, but there are still a few questions which I would like to be further cleared up. I would also like that these should be published in *Young India* at an early date. Your views on Council-entry are now quite clear and they do not now trouble me. But I would like that you should express your views as to the capturing of seats in the Municipalities and the District Boards. In 1921 I sent you one telegram inviting your opinion on these points. I received the following reply:

[1] This notice, set up in italics, was repeated in the subsequent issues of *Young India*.

"May capture Municipalities, doubtful about District Boards."[1] Towards the end of 1923, new elections have taken place in all the Municipalities and the N.C.O.'s have captured most of them. We have contested the District Board elections as well. Our experiences of these elections are very sad and instead of strengthening the Congress cause, they have materially weakened it. They gave rise to bitter controversies, mutual jealousies and hatred amongst our N.C.O. co-workers.

On the other hand, we have practically alienated the sympathies of our Moderate supporters, land-holders, and other interested persons. They have now assumed threatening attitude and are trying their best to obstruct and discredit us. What is more serious is that we have to keep up connection with the Government. We receive grants from the Government, and have to communicate everything to the Government officials. It is undoubtedly true that we get opportunities of serving the people, but the labour, time and energy we bestow do not produce adequate result, nor do they materially advance our cause of early attainment of swaraj. In the District Board, Primary, Secondary and Middle Vernacular Schools are under our control, but we have to run these on Government prescribed lines. I, therefore, request you to let me have your views. The election of Chairman and Vice-chairman is shortly to take place in our district and we want a clear reply whether we should contest for these seats. One thing appears to be clear and this is that it is useless to enter these bodies unless we get our own men as Chairman and Vice-chairman.

My last query is what we should do with our Congress organizations. Under the rules we have to elect members from villages to Circles, from Circles to Thanas, from Thanas to Sub-divisions or District, from District to the Province and from the Province to the A.I.C.C. It is a huge unwieldy affair. We have got neither workers nor funds and so we are unable to carry on this huge organization. Some of us suggest that we should concentrate all our activities on the District Boards and Municipalities, and leave the Congress organizations to its fate. The running of Congress organizations is very expensive and practically all have died out.

As regards constructive work, it appeals neither to our workers nor to the villagers nor the public. It takes a very long time and it passes my comprehension to understand how it can lead us to speedy attainment of swaraj. I do admit that constructive work is quite necessary, but the question is how to accomplish it speedily.

All our workers have lost faith and have become quite disheartened for want of adequate public response and want of wherewithal to support themselves and their families. Almost all have practically deserted the Congress organizations, as they cannot be supported. Unless our workers

[1] This telegram is not traceable.

be provided with at least subsistence allowance and they are infused with new life and fresh faith, no work is possible. By this time you must have come to know everything and it is needless to add anything. People have lost all faith in our Congress organizations and are quite unwilling to give us anything or to support us. It is quite true that we have not acted up to the high ideal of non-violence in thought, word and deed. We have practically non-co-operated amongst ourselves and one N.C.O. feels or takes another N.C.O. to be his antagonist. Mutual jealousies, rivalries, want of brotherliness and truthfulness have brought discredit to the whole Congress organization; so we get no response. What is wanted is a few truthful, honest and non-violent workers rather than a large army of workers fighting amongst themselves. A thorough cleansing of hearts and a complete overhauling of the entire Congress organization is necessary before we can achieve anything substantial. We have been caught up with a vain desire for name, fame and leadership. This has given rise to want of discipline in our ranks and stirred up feelings of jealousy and rivalries.

We must purify ourselves—this is the first requisite. The second requisite is that our workers should be free from the mental worry of earning something for themselves and their families. Well-to-do men neither give us financial support nor do they themselves take to national service. Therefore, the entire burden falls on the poorer classes.

PS.

1. Arrangement of financial support to our workers should be done at once, otherwise even the few who are with us will leave the work that they are doing.

2. Should you decide that we should stick to the District Board and Municipalities, you should give us a clear-cut programme for our work in these bodies. Should you decide otherwise, we should vacate all the seats in a body. It appears that the people are not ready for non-payment of cess or rents should that eventually arise. There is a great confusion as to our ideals in these bodies. Some say that we should make these bodies as battle-grounds for our fight with the Government, others urge obstruction and yet others advise us to work out these bodies and use them for public good. Capturing of these bodies has a weakening effect on our Congress organizations.

The writer has wide experience of public life and is a staunch worker. His letter, therefore, deserves careful perusal. For me it is a heart searcher.

I do not like, have never liked, this reliance on me for everything. It is the very worst way of managing national affairs. The Congress must not become, as it has threatened to become, one

man's show, no matter how good or great that one man be. I often think that it would have been better for the country and for me if I had served the full term of my imprisonment. The country would by that time have settled down to a programme which could be called its own. Today it is difficult to say whose the Congress programme is. It cannot be the country's if workers have every time to refer to me for guidance. It cannot be mine, for alone I can work no programme. The writer's reliance is not peculiar but typical. Another friend, after objecting to almost everything in the programme, says: "But in spite of all this, my reverence and affection for you are sufficiently deep to make me do anything you may want me to do, whether I agree with you or not." This friend goes further than the first. The latter at least agrees with the programme and wants advice. The former opposes and still wants to submit. All such devotion may flatter my vanity, but most certainly retards our progress towards our goal. We must dare to act according to our honest conviction even though there may be danger of our making terrible mistakes. Swaraj is a way of government by tests, trials and mistakes. It is a thousand times better that we are undone through our mistakes than that we avoid them through the perpetual guidance of a man be he ever so wise. It has become a serious question with me whether it would not be in the best interests of the country for me to retire altogether from all public activity and simply devote myself to my own chosen profession of spinning and weaving and playing with the children at the Satyagraha Ashram so long as personal friends care to support the Ashram. Anyway, my strong advice to friends and fellow-workers is never to accept my word as law. My advice is always at their disposal. But even that should be most sparingly sought.

A careful perusal of the foregoing letter shows that the writer has himself suggested the best remedy for the ills he so graphically describes. If insincerity, hypocrisy and jealousy have crept into our ranks, one must weed the vices out and we can do so only by withdrawing within ourselves. Five good, honest, self-sacrificing workers with faith are any day better than fifty thousand insincere, indolent workers without faith. They but hinder work even of the five.

Now for the concrete cases.

As for the district boards and even municipalities, entry into them by non-co-operators can only be justified if they further the Congress aims and help its organization. If one cannot work the khaddar programme or Hindu-Muslim unity or help untouchables or national schools through these institutions, we must certainly

vacate and shun them; much more so if the entry gives rise to wranglings between non-co-operators and raises bad blood generally.

As to workers' maintenance, I have no doubt that it must come from provincial organizations. The central organizations will never be able to control, regulate and pay provincial services. When a provincial organization fails to find local support, it deserves to die; for want of support shows that it never was popular in the province in question. And what is a local Congress organization if it is not popular? The fee of four annas per head by itself should make a Congress organization self-supporting if it has a large membership. If it has not, it shows again that it is not *popular*. It is my certain conviction that, wherever good khaddar work is done by the Congress, its organization is popular and is on a fair way to becoming self-supporting, if it has not done that already. But "my faith in the charkha," says the second writer already quoted by me:

> is at its low water-mark today. It is impossible for a whole middle-class family to subsist on the charkha only, especially when it is more than obvious that any such concentration would mean the elimination of all other activity. And it seems terrible waste and perverse economy to 'put racehorses to the plough' as the phrase has it.

This statement betrays ignorance of the fact that the claims of the charkha are much humbler than the writer attributes to it. No one has ever even suggested that the charkha, i.e., hand-spinning, can support a whole middle-class family. It is not claimed that it alone can support even the poorest family. But it is claimed that it can and is today entirely supporting many starving men and women who have been hitherto satisfied even with two pice per day. It is claimed for it that it can materially supplement the earning of millions of peasants. To the middle class it is recommended as a daily practice for the sake of training, for the sake of producing a charkha atmosphere and for the sake of making it possible to give higher wages to those who spin for hire. Lastly, the middle class people *can* live on weaving as thousands of weavers are today doing. Surely it is not a small thing if a middle-classs family can earn from two to three rupees per day. What is meant by 'all other activity', I do not know. If it means all other public activity, I wish it could be eliminated for the time being. It is just the thing wanted to bring into being an organization that would be irresistible in its demand for swaraj. It will not then be 'putting race-horses to the plough', but it will be bringing up the other horses to the level of the race-horses. When a ship is on fire, the captain is

the first one to stand at the pump and he brings up the rest to the same life-saving apparatus. Imagine the fate of a ship in which, when it is burning, the captain is playing fiddle and expects the sailors and the rest to take up buckets and put out the fire in the best way they can.

Young India, 8-5-1924

5. *IS IT NON-CO-OPERATION?*

The argument has been advanced that with the failure (in my opinion wrongly assumed) of the boycott of titles, schools, law-courts, and Councils, Non-co-operation is dead. The critics see nothing of Non-co-operation in the slow and unexciting khaddar programme. They forget that the fourfold boycott is like a scaffolding which is absolutely necessary till the whole structure is ready. It does not matter that the institutions, which are the symbols of the authority we seek to destroy, continue to exist so long as *we* do not make use of them. The fact is that we cannot erect our structure without the scaffolding of the fourfold boycott. And we must succeed if we can work the Congress organization without the aid of these institutions and even in spite of them. Moreover, let us not forget that our boycott is not fourfold, but fivefold. The fifth is by far the most important, i.e., boycott of foreign (not merely British) cloth.

The boycott is the negative, though on that account none the less useful, part of our programme. Khaddar, national schools, panchayats, Hindu-Muslim unity, and uplift of the untouchable, the drunkard and the opium-eater, are the positive part of our programme. The greater our progress in it, the greater will be the progress towards the boycott and, therefore, towards swaraj. Nature abhors a vacuum. Therefore, construction must keep pace with destruction. Even if all the titled friends gave up their titles, and if schools, courts and Councils were entirely deserted, and being thus embarrassed the Government abdicated in our favour, and if we had no constructive work to our credit, we could not conduct swaraj. We should be entirely helpless. I often wonder whether it is sufficiently realized that our movement is not one for mere change of personnel but for change of the system and the methods. Full khaddar programme is, therefore, to me full swaraj. The English interest in India is selfish and in conflict with the national interest. It is anti-national, because of the illegitimate cotton interest. To boycott, therefore, foreign cloth is to sterilize the English

and all other foreign interests. Boycott merely of British cloth may harm the British, but can lead to no construction in India. Boycott of British cloth will be a jump out of frying pan into fire. Not before the foreign piece-goods trade is entirely replaced by homespun will the bleeding process cease. Boycott of foreign cloth, therefore, is the centre of our boycott programme. The central boycott cannot succeed until we universalize khaddar. In order to achieve the desirable end, we will need to employ all our resources to the fullest extent. We shall need men, money and machinery, i.e., organization. We cannot universalize khaddar without Hindu-Muslim unity, without removing untouchability. To make khaddar successful is to *demonstrate* our capacity for self-government. Khaddar is a people's programme, for success in which all, high and low, rich and poor, Hindu and non-Hindu must take part.

But say the sceptics, 'How can khaddar bring swaraj? Will Englishmen then retire in our favour?' My answer is—yes and no. Yes, because Englishmen will then find that their interest must be coincident with that of India. They will then be content to remain in India as her servants, for they will have then found that they cannot *impose* their custom upon us. When, therefore, khaddar becomes successful, Englishmen's hearts will have been changed. They will regard it, then, as an honour to be our allies instead of regarding it, as they do now, their right to be our masters. My answer is no, if we intend to drive out Englishmen and ruin *every* English interest, legitimate or otherwise. Such is not the goal of the non-violent movement. Non-violence has its limits. It refuses to hate or generate hatred. Indeed, by its very nature, it is incapable of so doing. 'But' the sceptics further argue, 'suppose the English refuse to revise their system and insist upon holding India by the sword, what can universal use of khaddar do?' In thus doubting the efficacy of khaddar, they forget that khaddar is an indispensable preparation for civil disobedience. And this, everyone admits, is an irresistible force. Without the universal adoption of khaddar, I see no chance whatsoever of universal civil, i.e., non-violent, disobedience. Any single district that can be fully organized for khaddar is, if it is also trained for suffering, ready for civil disobedience. And I have not a shadow of doubt that even one district thus organized can make itself irresistible even though the whole might of the Government may be matched against it.

'Who shall bell the cat?' is the last question. That question is, however, irrelevant to the present inquiry. The question I set out to answer was whether constructive programme, i.e., khaddar, could

be considered part of Non-co-operation. I have attempted to prove that it is an integral part of Non-co-operation in its positive aspect.

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6. NOTE ON BHAGWANDAS'S LETTER

I gladly publish Babu Bhagwandas's[1] letter[2]. The Congress scheme of swaraj can only be formulated when the Congress is ready to take swaraj. What it will do *then*, no one can say *now*. But I have promised Babu Bhagwandas that I would certainly publish my own scheme. I am aware that all sorts of ideas are entertained about my conception of swaraj. I simply ask for breathing time. Meanwhile, I assure our respected countrymen that I have absolutely no design on capitalists. I can have none as I don't believe in violence. But I do want cleanliness in capitalism as well as in labour. And I would certainly resist capitalism being used to exploit the resources of the country for the use of the few, be they foreigners or home-born. But let me not anticipate my scheme.

Young India, 8-5-1924

7. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

POST ANDHERI,
May 8, 1924

DEAR MR. NATESAN[3],

Refreshing to see your writing again. Do please come either on your way or return. Somebody has evidently played a hoax. I am not coming to Madras for months to come. If and when I come, I would love to stay with you, if it is at all possible. I am

[1] Scholar and public worker of Banaras; took leading part in establishing Kashi Vidyapith, a national university, at Banaras.

[2] This was an elaborate appeal to Gandhiji to indicate in the columns of *Young India* 'the kind of swaraj that India needs'; for the text of the letter, *vide* Appendix I.

[3] G. A. Natesan; author, journalist and publisher; for some time member of the Council of State and Tariff Board; editor, *The Indian Review*

sorry I did not read your speech nor did I know of your resolution.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

G. A. NATESAN, ESQ.
"INDIAN REVIEW"
MADRAS

From a photostat: G.N. 2234

8. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Thursday [*May 8, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,

I have your letter. In spite of your bitter experiences, the only course is for you to go on doing your work. There is an error in your views about *goshalas*. Who can keep cows in cities, and who will maintain infirm cattle? People in the villages may certainly keep cows and buffaloes. The *goshala* activity does not come in the way of their keeping these.

Here is the message for the Conference[2]:

"The aim of the Conference ought to be to take stock of the work done so far and to lay down the programme of work for the future.

Much remains to be done for promoting carding, spinning, weaving, etc. If the Conference does it, it will, I believe, have brought credit to the fair name of Dholka and India.

I take it that there is none in Dholka who is regarded as an untouchable and that Hindus and Muslims there live like brothers."

I am not going even to Borsad; how, then, could I go there?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

DAHYABHAI PATEL
TALUKA SAMITI
DHOLKA

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 2688. Courtesy: D. M. Patel

[1] The postmark carries this date.
[2] Dholka Taluka Conference

9. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH[1]

ANDHERI,
Thursday [*May 8, 1924*][2]

BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I emphatically told you *not to attach any weight to my opinion.* Only a resolution which suits all should be passed. I have sent an article to *Navajivan*, which will perhaps throw more light on the matter. I can think further about this only after I have met all the workers and understood their points of view. It is not at all proper to be guided solely by what I think in the matter. Why don't you yourself think over every aspect and advise the people to do what you consider proper?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH
VARTEJ

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 5690

10. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

ANDHERI,
Thursday [*May 8, 1924*][3]

BHAISHRI VALJI[4],

I have received the other material sent by you. The proofs will certainly be sent to you. We, not you, are at the feet of the Himalayas. You could describe only yourself as being "half way to the Himalayas". You should know better than I about

[1] A public worker of Kathiawar, then associated with Kathiawar Political Conference

[2] The postmark bears this date.

[3] The postmark carries this date.

[4] Valji Govindji Desai; inmate of Satyagraha Ashram; worked on the editorial staff of *Young India*

the article you wrote at that time of my trial. Was I permitted to carry anything with me to the prison?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6002. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

11. DRAFT OF CABLE TO LAJPAT RAI[1]

[BOMBAY,
On or after *May 8, 1924*]

NEVER DREAMT SUCH THING. SEE NO CHANGE HEART WARRANTING CO-OPERATION.

GANDHI

The cable of proposed reply to be shown to Motilalji. If he approves its reply, it should be sent.[2]

From a photostat: S.N. 8790A

[1] 1865-1928; nationalist leader; was deported by the British Government in 1907 and lived for some years in the U.S.A.; President of the Indian National Congress, 1920, Calcutta session

This was in reply to Lajpat Rai's cable from Hampstead, England, dated May 7, 1924, received by Gandhiji on May 8. It read: "Great stir caused by telegrams reporting you propose co-operation with Government through Councils next Congress please wire if untrue read *Chronicle* wire today." A report had also appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, London, in a despatch from its Calcutta correspondent which said: "Mahatma Gandhi has decided to take the lead at the next Congress on a platform for securing a majority in the Assembly and Provincial Councils replacing the futile rejection of budget by a programme combining co-operation in carrying on the essential services with persistent demands backed up by consistent and substantial majorities for the speedy extension and recasting of the Reforms and speeding up Indianization including the Army."

[2] The draft carried this note by Gandhiji.

12. LETTER TO NARASINHRAO BHOLANATH DIVETIA[1]

ANDHERI,
Vaisakha Sud 6 [*May 10, 1924*][2]

DEAR FRIEND,

I have the letter which you sent for publication in *Navajivan*. It seems from it that you did not like the way I used your name in my article.[3] I wrote that sentence merely out of love. I have great regard for Bhai Khabardar's[4] learning and services to literature and for yours. Will you, however, forgive me if you still think that I have given any cause for offence? I will certainly publish your letter.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Narasinhraoni Rojnishi

13. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI[5]

[Before *May 11, 1924*][6]

"Adhiru Kathiawar"
"Agami Parishad"
"Antyaja Parishad"
"Satyagraha Chhavanima Mel"
"Namra Sevakne"
"Vorano Dar"
"Id Mubarak"
"Jnati Sudhar"

[1] 1859-1937; man of letters and educationist

[2] The addressee's letter referred to was published in *Navajivan*, 18-5-1924. *Vaisakha Sud* 6 fell on May 10.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 495-8.

[4] Ardeshar Faramji Khabardar, Parsi poet

[5] Mahadev Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's secretary for 25 years

[6] Seven of the items sent along with this letter were published in *Navajivan*, 11-5-1924.

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I send the items listed above. I do not propose to send any more tomorrow. The note "Satyagraha Chhavanima Mel"[1] should be shown to Vallabhbhai[2] and, if he disapproves of it or if you yourself consider it improper, you may not print it. Even if you decide not to print it, do make an inquiry about the matter. The charge is very serious.

Please tell Swami that I read nine galleys of proofs of the History of Satyagraha and despatched them by post on Sunday noon, and these ought to have reached there on Monday. Whether the person who posted them failed to do so in time I cannot say. If you have not received them, please wire. If, however, you have, and if the envelope is preserved, please find out the date in the postmark.

Was that Anavil cow saved[3] or given over to the butcher?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Please tell Swami that he should not worry on my account as I do not on his. I shall ask for any help or facility I need. I shall grumble a little though. Grumbling is bound to increase as one grows older.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8797

14. IMPATIENT KATHIAWAR

Friends tell me that the views which I expressed about the Kathiawar Political Conference[4] have caused some resentment. Since I took up the editorship of the three journals[5], I have almost stopped reading newspapers. But friends look after me and keep me informed about what I ought to know.

I have also heard it said: "That self-exiled Gandhi succumbed to the wiles of Pattani Saheb[6] and brought to nothing the awakening in Kathiawar. It is not surprising that Pattani Saheb who has

[1] Corruption in Satyagraha camp

[2] Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950); President, Indian National Congress, 1931; Deputy Prime Minister of India, 1947-50

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 527.

[4] This was to be held at Bhavnagar in January 1925.

[5] *Navajivan* in Gujarati and Hindi, and *Young India*

[6] Prabhashankar Pattani (1862-1935); member, Imperial Legislative Council and India Council, 1917-19; later, Dewan of the former Bhavnagar State in Saurashtra

risen through scheming and diplomacy, should have tricked a half-naked tramp mixing with *Bhangis* and weavers." As I have given elsewhere in this issue the substance of a letter from Abbas Saheb[1], so this also is the substance of what people say. No one has reported these actual words to me. But readers may trust that I have given correctly the substance of what has come to my ears. Kathiawaris living in Bombay say, "Gandhi has brought us ruin."

The truth is this: Pattani Saheb is not so full of knavery as is imagined. To defeat a satyagrahi by trickery, even a shrewd Kathiawari like Pattani Saheb will have to wait till he is born again as a satyagrahi. There is no word like "defeat" in the vocabulary of a satyagrahi. One satyagrahi, it can be stated, may defeat another, but this is doing violence to the meaning of the word "defeat". A satyagrahi gives in when he sees his mistake and rises higher as a result. This cannot be called defeat.

I am convinced that the part played by Pattani Saheb in my presence regarding the decision about the Conference was such as enhances his own and Kathiawar's prestige. There was no need for him to employ diplomacy. I stated the reasons which weighed with me and I am aware of no other reason besides these.

I know that I would be of no further service when, yielding to somebody's influence or my love for him, I deviate from the path of truth. I dislike suicide and am not likely, therefore, to commit the folly of deviating from that path.

A satyagrahi's objective must be absolutely pure. There was certainly some impropriety in recommending that the Bhavnagar Conference should be held in Porbandar. I am using the mildest term to describe what happened. It is an unalterable rule for a satyagrahi that his case must be unsullied—like milk in its whiteness. Just as even a speck of dirt renders milk unfit for use, so even a slight flaw in a case makes it unworthy of a satyagrahi. I, therefore, do not need to use a stronger term than "impropriety".

The second reason is equally sound. I did not know that the organizers had decided to hold the Conference even subject to conditions. I have often made it clear that I am against agreeing to conditions. That in certain circumstances it may be necessary to accept conditions is beside the point. Once the principle of conditions has been accepted, the matter no longer remains within the scope of satyagraha. If the Conference is to be held on certain conditions, then why not agree as well to hold it in Songadh? The reason for accepting conditions was that in the present circumstances

[1] Abbas Tyabji

there was no other way of creating an awakening among the people. This motive is not irrelevant or unworthy. The purpose would have been the same even if it had been decided to hold the Conference at some other place. It is by no means as certain that, if we resorted to satyagraha, we would be able to hold the Conference. A satyagrahi fights unto death. If he dies fighting, then, according to the philosophy of satyagraha, he will have won. The satyagrahis did their duty when they went to jail. But the Conference has not yet been held. The aim just now is to hold the Conference somehow. "We wish to hold the Conference if we can do so on our terms, not otherwise"—this is the satyagrahi's attitude. "We wish to hold the Conference somehow"—this cannot be the satyagrahi's way. The people are not preparing themselves for satyagraha to accept whatever kind of swaraj the Government may offer. They are cultivating this irresistible strength in order to win the kind of swaraj they want. It is only when Kathiawar decides to hold the Conference without agreeing to any conditions that it will be faced with the duty of offering satyagraha. It is not the duty of a satyagrahi to insist on holding a Conference which is subject to conditions. To do so would be to exchange a copper-piece for a cowrie.

This does not mean that, if there are no conditions, the satyagrahi is free to indulge in abuse. How can anyone who forsakes humility and civility be called a satyagrahi? It is because he can restrain himself that he declines to let another restrain him. But his self-imposed limits are the strictest possible.

If the Conference does its work this year with perfect civility and compels admiration even from its opponents, but is even then required next year to submit to conditions or has to face similar obstacles, then the satyagrahis' case will be clear and strong and no one will have any ground to criticize them. If any satyagrahis come forward then, they will find a ready field for battle.

One comes across some good and simple Kathiawaris, however, who say: "Once the present enthusiasm has subsided, from where shall we get the satyagrahis?" These persons ought to know that satyagraha is not intoxication produced by *bhang*. It is not a passing fancy. Satyagraha is an urge from within. As time passes, it does not slow down but grows more compelling. If it can be suppressed, then it was not an urge from within but only an illusion worth no more than a mirage. Only those who will be found ready next year will deserve to be called satyagrahis. Kathiawar is a land where Rajputs and Kathis have fought all their lives for their lands. Two Vaghers of Barda, Mulu Manek and Jodha

Manek, shook the entire Agency[1]. Their zeal did not rise one moment and subside the next. More[2], an outlaw, fought single-handed for years. All these men fought for trivial and selfish ends. What strength of determination in the pursuit of their aim, in a peaceful and straightforward manner, should be displayed by satyagrahis who would take upon themselves the burden of the grievances of all the people of Kathiawar, let them estimate for themselves and then answer the critics.

"But look at Pattani Saheb's order. With a stroke of the pen, he has added another ten or twenty crimes to his autocratic code of law and, for these invented crimes, the punishment is six months' imprisonment! Even the British Government in India cannot in this way act like the magic mango tree and produce laws as its fancy takes it. That, despite such naked tyranny, we should refrain from satyagraha and hold the Conference in Songadh, what logic is this?" This argument too is being put forward. The fallacy in it is obvious. If our aim had been to offer satyagraha against the law the latter is certainly a worthy target. But our plan is to start satyagraha about the Conference. Even if a sentence of hanging was laid down for holding the Conference, a satyagrahi would not turn a hair. The person who issued such an order would of course invite disgrace upon himself. If, because of the order mentioned above, an association for denouncing Pattani Saheb was started, with rules permitting only satyagrahi terms of criticism, I would myself join it. I certainly think that this order is absurd. If holding a conference is not a crime according to the criminal law of Bhavnagar, then he should have allowed it to be held even at the sacrifice of his job. Promulgating arbitrary laws is not Pattani Saheb's speciality. It is part of the Kathiawar atmosphere. We would be happy if Pattani Saheb rose above it. But we have not yet become watchdogs of Pattani Saheb's policy. When Kathiawar has a crop of true satyagrahis, then Pattani Saheb will no longer have an atmosphere of tyranny around him. And I shall not be surprised if he himself becomes a satyagrahi then.

If Pattani Saheb and the Princes had not been living in this degenerate atmosphere, they would not have been capable of passing such an order. Holding conferences should be one of the rights of the subjects. Without them the rulers would not know the mind of the people. It is the subjects' right to criticize and denounce their ruler. The latter has the right to punish anyone who

[1] The Western India States Agency with headquarters at Rajkot headed by the Political Agent

[2] Mowar; *vide* p. 36.

maligns him. A king like Rama would not even punish a man who had abused him. He did not punish a lowly washerman. On the contrary, he felt no shame in deciding in an instant to abandon the jewel-like Sita,[1] and today countless Hindus like myself worship this shameless Rama. The flattery of subjects has brought about the downfall of their rulers. If the latter can bear the abuses of subjects, they will certainly prosper.

Refraining from denunciation, even after securing the right to denounce, is the way of the satyagrahi. I should like to see this rule faithfully observed at the Songadh Conference.

Next week we shall consider what steps the Kathiawaris can decide on at the Conference.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-5-1924

15. THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

The Conference[2] to be held in Borsad is extremely important. In 1920, the Gujarat Provincial Conference had made the task of the Congress easy.[3] A similar opportunity for Gujarat has now arisen.

I am very unhappy that I shall not be able to be physically present on this auspicious occasion. I had hoped to offer in person my congratulations to the people of Borsad on their great victory.[4] But, knowing my physical condition, I hope that my brothers and sisters will forgive me. I plan to go to the Ashram at the end of this month.[5] But I realize that it will be some time before I have enough strength to move about. My body cannot as yet stand the strain of journeys, gatherings and shouts. I feel it is necessary

[1] In the *Uttarakanda* of the *Ramayana*, Rama sends his innocent wife, Sita, into the forest, because a washerman, one of his subjects, made some insinuations concerning her long stay in Lanka in the custody of Ravana.

[2] The seventh Gujarat Political Conference which was to be held on May 13, under the presidentship of Kaka Kalelkar

[3] The fourth Gujarat Political Conference, held at Ahmedabad in August 1920, passed the non-co-operation resolution, even though it was contended by the opposition that a provincial conference was not competent to adopt the resolution in advance of the Congress, the parent institution. The non-co-operation resolution was adopted by the Congress at its special session held at Calcutta in September 1920.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 381-3.

[5] Gandhiji returned to Sabarmati Ashram on May 29, 1924.

that I should go to the Ashram. But let no one think that I have returned to Gujarat. I shall not be able to attend any function at present even in Ahmedabad. Just as I am resting in Juhu for change of air and go nowhere, so I wish to rest for three months in the Ashram, that is, till the end of August.

Abbas Saheb is becoming younger every day and his enthusiasm rises. He cannot tolerate humiliation for Vallabhbhai or for Gujarat. He is very proud of his able and devoted workers and simply orders me: "You must not go to Gujarat just now. Your purse is huge and we have got to fill it. If it is your pride that you alone can collect money, we are going to humble it. Let others think that you are indispensable, that only you can conduct satyagraha and that you must be consulted in every matter, great or small. We Gujaratis think nothing of that sort. You yourself admit that without you we have been able to conduct a satyagraha campaign better than any of yours. And now you will be compelled to admit that we can also collect money and popularize the spinning-wheel without your help." And so on. I do not mean to tell my readers that these are the actual words in his letter. That is in English. He calls himself a Gujarati but even I can say that his Gujarati is worse than mine. However, Abbas Saheb is a milch cow; so who would criticize his Gujarati? Besides, why criticize the Gujarati of one who writes in English? I have given my readers the gist of what he has written in English. If my version is incorrect, he may let me have the correct one and I shall be ready to publish it in *Navajivan* together with an apology.

In any case, out of my respect for Abbas Saheb, if not for the sake of my health, I should confine myself to the Ashram till my purse is full and every Gujarati must imagine that I am not in Gujarat. Borsad should not need my presence. If I manage to go at all, it will be for selfish reasons. Henceforth, our conferences must be entirely business-like. There is no room for public shows and the like in business. The days are past when it was the practice to collect big people at every conference. Their time is wasted, money is spent needlessly on railway fares and the local workers have to neglect their work and see to their reception, to say nothing about large crowds of idle spectators collecting. There was some justification at one time for all this in the belief that the presence of big people would attract the attention and interest of those portions of the public which would not otherwise attend; there is no such justification today. We should now try to draw that section of the public by our service to them in

respect of their individual problems. If all the leaders of India had been present at a meeting, they could not have attracted as many people as did the satyagraha in Borsad.

To tell the truth, we have not so far been able to serve fully even those whom we have drawn into our fold. Such people have not started working on their own. When they have wholeheartedly adopted the Congress path of non-violence and truth and thoroughly understood the idea of non-co-operation, then they themselves will spread the message to others.

We needed strength of numbers and have got it. Now we require improvement in quality. We have to watch and see how many out of this vast number turn out to be sincere workers. This can be discovered only by ourselves working and getting others to work.

There was no discomfiture for us in Bardoli. When we discovered weakness at one spot[1], like true soldiers we prudently stopped our march in order to remove it. But the task we had set ourselves in Bardoli still remains to be accomplished. Moreover, now we need to secure more marks to pass the test than we did at that time, because we have had longer time in which to prepare. The work is more difficult than we thought, and we face obstacles of a kind we had never imagined. There is now a split in our party. The bond between Hindus and Muslims has weakened. Hence, we need much greater strength now.

At Borsad, we have to find answers to these problems. Whether or not a resolution should be moved about them Vallabhbhai knows best. He is the director of the show. I only watch from a distance and criticize. I know that this task has to be done sooner or later and, therefore, draw people's attention to it.

Yes, if one condition is fulfilled, civil disobedience may not become necessary for winning swaraj. It may not, if a large part of the country takes up the constructive programme of the Congress and successfully implements all the items. Satyagraha is a sort of tonic. It arouses those who slumber and gives strength to the feeble. If only a few among the people are ready for sacrifices, while some others understand and approve of the national objective but are not ready for sacrifices, the satyagrahi starts a *yajna* on behalf of the whole country and offers himself as an oblation. I even consider that, should only the whole of Gujarat become perfect in every respect, civil disobedience may not be necessary. Being perfect in every respect means making itself fit

[1] Here Gandhiji presumably refers to the Chauri Chaura tragedy.

for civil disobedience. No one would choose to measure his strength against such people. This too Borsad has demonstrated. It had made itself so completely fit for the task it had set before itself that the Government did not think it necessary to oppose it. Moreover, satyagraha aims at change of heart. Once our opponent has realized that our means are worthy, he will have no desire to use his strength against us. At present, the Government not only doubts our professions of truth and non-violence, it positively disbelieves them. Should the British disarm today, would they be safe from us? The first test which a person must pass to become a satyagrahi is assuring personal safety to the opponent. How many of us would pass this test? We cannot, therefore, go beyond the position we had taken up two years ago and should concentrate on preparing only one taluka or district of Gujarat. I believe even Borsad is not such a taluka as yet. Bardoli should have been, but is it? The modest degree of preparedness which sufficed Borsad for satyagraha in regard to its local grievances will not enable us to undertake the task of winning swaraj.

I state one by one the conditions for being so prepared:

1. In such a taluka, every man and woman should be wearing khadi woven in the taluka itself from yarn spun locally.
2. People should have given up liquor and opium so completely that there is not a single booth for them.
3. There should be sincere love between Hindus and Muslims.
4. Not only should the *Antyajas*[1] not be regarded as untouchables, but their children should be free to attend national schools and they themselves to draw water from public wells and enter public temples for *darshan*[2].
5. There should be a national school in every village and town.
6. Very few cases should be taken to courts and all disputes among the people should be settled with the help of the *panchas*[3].

The Anand taluka had resolved at the same time as Bardoli, that is, in 1921, to prepare itself in this manner and had asked for permission to join Bardoli. This same Anand may not actually be ready now, but is it even willing to prepare itself? I hope that not a shred of foreign or mill cloth will meet our eyes in Borsad, or, if one sees any such cloth, it will be only on the persons of Government servants and others like them. I had heard that there was some difficulty about the *pandal*. There was some talk,

[1] Lowest caste among Hindus traditionally charged with sanitary duties
[2] Sight of person, place or thing considered holy
[3] Literally "the five", here a board of arbitrators

I heard, that mill cloth should be used for the *pandal* as khadi would be too expensive. Until we realize that khadi, even if expensive, is in reality cheap and other cloth, even if offered free, is expensive, we shall never become completely khadi-minded. If we wish to identify ourselves with the poorest in the country, we must never consider whether khadi is coarse or fine, costly or cheap. If we cannot afford it, we should be ready to go naked rather than let any other cloth touch our limbs. Similarly, if we cannot find the money, we should do without a *pandal*. Our *pandal* is the star-studded sky. In a country in which the rains come in the proper season, there is no great need for a *pandal*. We can have a fencing of bamboo poles and carry on our work. Those who are artistically inclined can show their art even in this. Meetings should take place in the mornings and evenings so that other necessary work can also be attended to during the day. We simply cannot afford to have *pandals* which will accommodate thousands.

It is expected that our distinguished leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru will attend the Conference in Borsad. There are likely to be differences of opinion between them and us. Probably a majority of us are not in favour of entering the Councils. In these circumstances, we should show all the greater respect for those who advocate it. A satyagrahi never shows contempt for those who hold opinions different from his. He may win them over with arguments and love. His reason will teach him to have patience and his love will teach him to show respect. If difference of opinion always leads to personal estrangement, the movement for swaraj simply cannot go on. As with a guest like Motilal, so with the Swarajists of Gujarat also, our behaviour must be such as will not hurt anyone in the slightest measure. Vithalbhai[1] has entered the Assembly, and so have some other Gujaratis. We must not on that account show them less respect. We may follow our own counsel, but should show respect to everyone. How can a satyagrahi have an enemy? My information is that, even in Gujarat, the issue of Council-entry has embittered people against one another. Some blame the Swarajists for this and others blame the non-co-operators. If there is truth in the general belief that there can be no bitterness unless both the parties are at fault, then both Swarajists and non-co-operators must share the blame

[1] Vithalbhai Patel (1873-1933); member of the Bombay Legislative Council and later of the Imperial Legislative Council; first elected President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, Delhi

more or less. Non-co-operators are of the view that Swarajists have weakened their movement. Those of them who assert this are under special obligation to maintain sweetness or civility in their relations with the Swarajists. Moreover, it is plain that the non-co-operators are in a majority. The duty of maintaining civility lies primarily with the stronger party. I hope that the Borsad Conference will provide an object-lesson in civility.

However, maintaining civility does not mean that in its name or in the name of unity one has to give up one's views. At present, the most important issue before the country is that of Council-entry. In whatever way it is decided, the workers' duty is to go on with their tasks with singleness of purpose and unshakable faith. There is a rich crop waiting for harvesters to gather.

1. We need men and women workers of integrity and character who should be proficient in weaving.

2. We need energetic teachers who should be men of spotless character and possess intellectual curiosity.

3. We need workers who will devote themselves to the service of *Antyajas*.

There is a dearth of such men in Gujarat as in the rest of the country. What is the way to meet this need? There is only one. We should have complete faith in the cause for which we work and be willing to carry out orders. Freedom does not mean everyone behaving as an officer. In a free system, the employees work not for gain but because it is their duty to work. When they are not free, they serve for their livelihood for want of other employment. When we are free, there is virtue in serving the system; there is honour in it. Service in conditions of subjection is morally degrading, it is humiliating. If everyone wants to be an officer and no one is willing to obey, the whole system will become autocratic and will be life-destroying rather than life-giving. If the Conference to be held in Borsad provides a band of sincere workers for Gujarat, it will have done much.

Kaka Kalelkar[1] is the President of the Conference and Mama Phadke[2] is the President of the *Antyaja* Conference. Both are Maharashtrians by birth but have become Gujaratis by choice. They are, according to me, the better Maharashtrians and Gujaratis for this. They have been giving to Gujarat what is good in Maha-

[1] Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885), teacher and author; a co-worker of Gandhiji

[2] Vithal Laxman Phadke, a teacher of Ganganath Vidyalaya of Baroda, who became Gandhiji's follower and devoted himself to the uplift of traditionally untouchable communities in Gujarat

rashtra and are assimilating what is good in Gujarat. Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc., are but limbs of India which support one another. Only if they do so can they function as organs of the same body. I hope, therefore, that Gujarat will fully recognize the work of Kaka Saheb and Mama and accept them as their very own. Gujaratis must not feel that those who are not ours by a natural bond can never be ours. This idea has its source in hatred. We should rather wish that Maharashtra may send more workers to us, if it can spare them. For a worker, there is place everywhere. Considerations of designation weigh only with leaders. By conferring a unique honour on Kaka and Mama, Gujarat has publicly recognized that they live here as dedicated servants, and by honouring them it has honoured itself.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-5-1924

16. MY NOTES

Bohras' Fear

A Bohra gentleman writes:[1]

I have omitted from this letter certain details which he has cited to prove the fact of oppression. It will profit no one to revive memories of past conflicts. The problem raised by this Bohra friend is a complicated one, which cannot be solved by giving publicity to it in *Navajivan* or by my commenting upon it. Nor will the mention of the Bohra community along with Hindus, Muslims and Christians do much good. People have been shouting about Hindu-Muslim unity for many years, yet where is it? This unity will not be brought about through speeches. Nor will my feeble pen or tongue be able to do anything. Each community should realize that in unity lie the interests of all and the safety of the religion of each, and should bear sincere love towards others. Fanaticism should give place to tolerance and, most important of all, we should learn the truth that no party can use force against another for the sake, or in the name, of religion. If Hindus and Muslims observe this in their relations with each other, that will be enough to make the other communities feel secure. It should be quite unnecessary to mention the Bohras specifically. They, too, are Muslims. If the latter give up fighting with the

[1] The letter is not translated here.

Hindus, they will stop fighting among themselves also. In other words, if there is a genuine understanding, that is, understanding of the heart, between Hindus and Muslims, there will be such understanding between the different sects of the same religion. If we fail in this and the various parties take every occasion to fight against one another and amongst themselves, we shall have to resign ourselves to permanent slavery. "Long live the Government and may it prevent us from flying at each other's throat"—this will be the new prayer and the new religion for all of us. Let us see whether Hindus and Muslims or either of them show any sense. There is one advantage in the present situation, viz., that it cannot last long. From what the two communities decide within the next four or six months, we shall know whether India is destined to remain in slavery for another 50 years or will have swaraj in a short time.

"Antyaja" Conference

After the *Antyaja* Conference at Godhra,[1] we have been holding such conferences every year. This year's Conference is of special importance. One reason is that Mama Phadke is the President and another that I am free. I had appealed to Bardoli and Gujarat that at any rate the problem of untouchability should be solved immediately. That this has not been possible yet, we may only blame our fate. The evil of untouchability seems to be in the blood of Hindus and, therefore, we look upon what is sin as virtue. We cannot see the blemish in us which the whole world regards as sin and for which the Hindus stand condemned before all the nations. A painful incident took place near Petlad[2], about which a friend writes as follows:[3]

Such a thing can happen even today, and that too near the Petlad station! This is not an isolated incident; we hear of such cruelty everywhere. To rescue the *Antyajas* from this pitiable for, Congress Hindus should constitute themselves their protectors and, whenever they see an *Antyaja* in a train, they should be ready to go to his help. The easiest way is to take upon oneself the blows aimed at the *Antyajas*. This, however, is no remedy for the disease itself. For that, we should see that the movement against untouchability becomes widespread. This can happen only if Congress members are sincere. At present, they themselves suffer

[1] Held for the first time in 1918

[2] A station on Anand-Cambay railway, in Gujarat

[3] Not translated here. The letter described how an *Antyaja* passenger was mercilessly belaboured by some Bania passengers in a railway carriage.

from this disease. Some of them even refuse to have *Antyaja* pupils in the national schools. Their attitude is lukewarm. The *Antyaja* Conference should request such half-hearted members to leave the Congress and should intensify its work among the *Antyajas*. It should inquire into their hardships regarding travelling and then try to find a remedy. It should tell them how to defend themselves.

Apart from this, it has before it the other tasks of starting more schools in their localities, promoting spinning and weaving among them and persuading them to give up drinking soon. There are, of course, difficulties in regard to every one of these items, but much more can be accomplished than has been done so far if we get devoted volunteers for this work. If the *Antyaja* Conference can do something to increase the number of sincere workers, that itself will be a valuable contribution.

To "An Humble Servant"

Some gentleman has written to me a letter signing himself as above. He has not given his name. A similar letter was received some time ago and I tore it up. This second letter is by way of reminder. The correspondent does not repeat the question he had asked in the first letter. The rule is that anonymous letters should be ignored. It is, therefore, my humble request to this "humble servant", if his question is important, that he should repeat it and sign his name.

"Id" Greetings

I have received a number of letters from Muslim friends sending me good wishes for *Id*. I thank them for their love for me. I am sure they do not wish me to write to them individually to convey my thanks. I also wish them all a happy *Id*. At a time like this, when there is widespread distrust between the two communities, even a little evidence of sincere love is as pleasant as a small patch of greenery in an otherwise barren scene. The only way to prove that the letters of greetings are prompted by genuine love is to take up activities which strengthen the bond between Hindus and Muslims. I hope that the friends who have sent me the messages will take every opportunity to plant seeds of amity in the country.

Caste Reform

I have already written in *Navajivan* concerning the use of satyagraha for caste reform.[1] This has prompted some lovers

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 432-6.

of *Navajivan* to express the desire that I should now use *Navajivan* to promote this cause. Some others fear that the political chapter in my life is over or that I wish to convert politics into social reform. I cannot agree to give the first place to caste reform. *Navajivan* is run to help the cause of swaraj. It exists entirely for this purpose. The cause of social reform is dear to me, but it has no connection whatever with my present activities in the field of journalism. Much can be accomplished in the field of caste reform by individuals through their conduct and example. However, I do not regard social reform as distinct from politics. Just as the latter should conform to moral principles and dharma, so should social reform. Swaraj is not possible for a society with a corrupt order. Hence, questions of social reform can also be occasionally discussed in *Navajivan*. Really speaking, eradication of untouchability is a task of social reform, but we have realized now that this evil is so widespread and its eradication so urgent a task that, unless we succeed in it, swaraj will be impossible.

But those reformers who are concerned only with the issue of caste reform should understand the limitations of *Navajivan*, and the others who fear that *Navajivan* will give up its interest in the swaraj movement should reassure themselves, having regard to my views expressed here.

Community Dinners

This is a month of marriages. Much money is spent on community dinners and similar functions connected with marriages. It may be too much to request the well-to-do to refrain from spending money for such purposes. But such dinners have become obligatory and they impose an intolerable burden on many families. Not only should such feasts be optional but rich families should set an example by exercising some restraint in this matter. If the money thus saved is spent on education or on other activities of social welfare, the community itself and through it the whole society would be benefited. Abandoning the custom of community dinners at the time of marriages is a desirable reform indeed, but giving up the practice of such dinners after death is an absolutely essential reform. In my view, giving community dinners after death is a sin. I see no meaning in them. A feast is regarded as an occasion for rejoicing. Death, on the contrary, is a time of grief. It is difficult to understand how dinners can be arranged at such a time. Because of my respect for Sir Chinubhai[1], I attended the dinner given after his

[1] Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, Baronet, a civic leader of Ahmedabad

death. The scene on that occasion, the squabbles among the various communities invited to the dinner and the irresponsible behaviour of the guests are still fresh in my memory. I saw there no reverence for the dead man. What place, then, can mourning have on such an occasion? That reform even in such a matter will require time is proof of the strength of custom and of our indifference. Even if the *mahajans* do not effect this reform, individuals can certainly act. The present condition of *mahajans* is pathetic. They often wish to introduce reforms, but are afraid to do so. If some bold persons take the lead in this matter, they will give courage to the *mahajans* who wish to introduce this reform and pave the way for it.

Interdining and Intermarriages

Perhaps, even more important than stopping community dinners is the problem of encouraging intercaste marriages. *Varnashrama*[1] is useful, but a plethora of sub-castes can only do harm. It can safely be said that intermarriage should be permitted in all cases in which interdining is permitted. In fact, we find that many such marriages have taken place. This is a reform which cannot now be held up. Wise elders, therefore, would do well to encourage it. If they try to impose more restraint than is acceptable to people in this age, they will run the risk of being ignored. If it becomes necessary to start a reform in such matters against the wishes of the *mahajan*, it will be proper for the reformers to do so with civility. I have even known reformers who held the *mahajans* in contempt and invited them to do their worst. Such aggressiveness comes in the way of the reform and, where the *mahajan* is too weak to take punitive action, the reformers cease to be reformers and follow the way of licence. Licence is not reform; it does not raise society but brings about its downfall.

National Education through Lotteries

A friend has sent me copy of a notice announcing a lottery for raising money for national education, and asks my opinion about it. I am certainly against lotteries. They are a form of gambling. Where money required for education cannot be collected in a straightforward manner, there must be some weakness in the workers, be it no more than inefficiency. Such persons are not qualified to undertake educational work. I would advise those who intend to subscribe to the lottery to save their money.

[1] The division of society into four *varnas* or castes and of the individual life into four *ashramas* or stages

They will deserve compliments if they hand over the amount to some trustworthy person, to be used for education or a similar purpose. Speculation in shares is also a kind of lottery. I hear that hundreds in Bombay have lost money through it. Is not this enough?

I have before me this distressing letter[1]. I compliment this friend for refusing to submit to sprinkling. Those of us who believe that untouchability is a sin, how can they betray their principle by agreeing to ceremonial purification? The Rajput friend should plead with the other members of his community and, in case they remain obdurate, my considered opinion is that he should humbly accept the punishment of being put out of the community, but on no account agree to sprinkling.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-5-1924

17. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

Monday [*May 12, 1924*][2]

A Full Stop
Learning Urdu and Spinning
A Plea for Punctuality
Living on Spinning and Weaving
Letter from Lalaji
From Sarojini, and a Tribute
Not Inconsistent
Treatment of Mr. Majli
Young India and *Navajivan*
Andrews' Notes (sent last week)
Jail Experiences
Empire Goods
Moplah Relief

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

Please correct the errors when reading.

I have your two letters. I am sending today material as listed above. You have already received Andrews' Notes. I do not propose to send anything more.

[1] Not translated here. It stated that a caste Hindu working among the *Antyajas* was, on pain of excommunication, told to undergo ceremonial purification whenever he touched an *Antyaja*.

[2] Some of the items mentioned in the list appeared in *Young India*, 15-5-1924, and the preceding Monday fell on May 12.

I do not know how the Note entitled *Gay Bachi* [The Cow Saved] got lost. If it cannot be traced, I will write another. We are very careful in this matter here, but we shall be more careful henceforward.

Give the reports of Borsad Parishad and other conferences in *Navajivan* and *Young India* yourself. Some local news of our activities should also appear.

The translation of the article on Visnagar appearing in *Swaraj* is very faulty. Your translation of it also did not appeal to me. There are even some misinterpretations. I have revised half of it. I did not have time to revise the rest. Now, perhaps, we may not print it at all. Sending it to other papers is out of the question. Even if we print it, we can do so only in *Young India*. If I get time to revise the remaining portion, we shall consider printing it next week. I used the word *siskarvu* for "challenge". If you find a better word, let me have it. *Ritusam* means *rituvar* [seasonal] and *murchhai* means *badai* [vanity, boasting]. In an article about Kathiawar, Kathiawari words came readily to the pen.

The name of the outlaw is not More, but Mowar. I even met him once.

I had a telegram from Mrs. Joseph[1] too. I wired back to her saying that it was not necessary to send you, as the deputation from that place was coming here. Besides, I only wished to explain general principles. There is no scope whatever for any misunderstanding. I still think that they are spoiling their case in Vaikom.[2] We shall discuss this when they come.

Surely, you do know Valji's nature. If, by placating him, we can get him to do some work in which he takes pleasure, that will be all to the good. My effort is to erase his idiosyncrasies by giving him scope for expression. Certainly, we are not going to do this for others. Despite his many angularities, Valji has a straightforwardness which I myself, certainly, value and put to good use, and I want you also to do likewise.

Radha's[3] health is quite good, but she is not regaining her strength as speedily as I would wish. She is cheerful now. Kikibehn[4] is brave, but, poor girl, she is suffering very much. The fever does not leave her. She eats regularly. The air, it must be

[1] Wife of George Joseph, barrister of Madurai who edited *Young India* and *The Independent* for a while

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 440-3.

[3] Daughter of Maganlal Gandhi

[4] Sister of J. B. Kripalani

said, is very fresh and pure. Doctors Dalal and Jivraj have examined her thoroughly, but we do not know what to do.

I have been feeling that Kanti[1], Rasik[2] and Manu[3] should not be brought here. If Ba[4] suffers on this account, let her. "*Bhakti*, or devotion to God, has to be paid for with the head; difficult indeed is the way in front."—this is knowledge born of experience. I have always thought that pure devotion is impossible unless one hardens the heart.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 8785

18. *MESSAGE TO GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BORSAD*

May 13, 1924

Borsad has won glory for Gujarat. By offering satyagraha and making sacrifices, it has served both itself and the country. It has cleared the ground; the job of construction remains and this is difficult work. I know that it is in progress. It will have been completed when the Borsad taluka does not use or buy any cloth other than hand-spun khadi, when there is not a single shop within its limits selling foreign or mill-made cloth, when no one in the taluka drinks liquor or consumes hemp or opium and no one is guilty of theft or immorality, when children, girls as well as boys —whether of *Antyaja* or other families—attend national schools, when there are no disputes or quarrels among the people and, even if there be any, these are settled by a *pancha*, when Hindus and Muslims live amicably like blood-brothers and no one looks down upon *Antyajas*. If we make up our minds, all this is quite easy. I am sure that, if Borsad succeeds in bringing it about, it will secure swaraj for India. Let the people pledge themselves that they will work to this end; I pray that they will have the strength to take such a pledge. They should, however, take it only if they are determined to fulfil it. Unless they are as deter-

[1] & [2] Grand-children of Gandhiji; sons of Harilal Gandhi
[3] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi
[4] Kasturba Gandhi

mined as Harishchandra[1] was to keep his word, it will be wiser for them not to take any pledge.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

19. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

May 13, 1924

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR[2],

Our friends of the Depressed Classes Mission had been to me. You probably know that Mr. Birla[3] denies having made any promise to build them a temple. I have told them that, if they raise a decent sum among themselves, I shall endeavour to beg some subscriptions for them. They wish me to tell you the purport of my conversation with them. Hence this letter.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, p. 297

20. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

JUHU,
Vaisakha Sud 9 [*May 13, 1924*][4]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter.

I am quite sure an attitude of tolerance towards opposition by members of your community will bear fruit in the end. All of us have both divine and dark forces working within us. Some amount of agitation is, therefore, bound to persist. But we need not be afraid of it. The dark forces can be overcome by sus-

[1] Legendary king of Ayodhya who gave up his wealth, kingdom, wife and son, for the sake of truth

[2] M. R. Jayakar (1873-1959); lawyer, author and Liberal leader; noted for his role as mediator and negotiator

[3] Ghanshyamdas Birla; industrialist and philanthropist who gave financial assistance to Gandhiji's schemes of social welfare; member, Second Round Table Conference, 1931

[4] *Vaisakha Sud* 9 fell on this date. The date below Gandhiji's signature in the source suggests that he signed the letter the next day.

tained effort to control them, but we must be fully convinced in our heart that it is our duty to help the forces of light. I am anxious about your father and brother. If they are thinking of organizing those in your favour and fighting it out and if you cannot persuade them to keep to the path of peace, there will be the danger of people in your own family adopting two opposite courses. At such a time, one is in a fix what to do. I would beg your father and brother, too, not to be responsible for creating two hostile camps in your community.

I would certainly not consider it proper for you to apologize for what you did because you thought it right to do and about the worthiness of which even today you have no doubt.

I have received Rs. 5,000 sent on your behalf. You can send whatever amount you consider proper for *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

About fifty copies are to be given free.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI
14-5-1924

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6004. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

21. *TELEGRAM TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN*[1]

[On or after *May 13, 1924*]

HAKIM AJMAL KHAN SAHIB[2]

WEAKER OWING STRAIN OTHERWISE EXCELLENT HOPE DAUGHTER PROFITING BY CHANGE

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8801

[1] This was in reply to Hakim Ajmal Khan's telegram of May 13, 1924, which read: "Please wire your health progress after my visit."

[2] 1865-1927; Muslim physician and politician; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

22. *MESSAGE TO "ANTYAJA" CONFERENCE, BORSAD*[1]

May 14, 1924

The problem of untouchability is becoming more and more important day by day, and this is but right. You and I both know that we have not taken up work among *Antyajas* in order to make political capital out of it. The eradication of untouchability is primarily a religious problem, though it is also true that it holds the key to swaraj. I am getting more and more convinced every day that Hinduism cannot survive if it clings to the practice of untouchability. By trying to abolish it, we purify ourselves and not the untouchables. In doing our duty in this matter, I would leave out the consideration of self-interest, namely, its importance for swaraj. True, I have had a hand in getting it included in the Congress programme; I did so, however, with no political motive but from a purely religious point of view. It was included in the Congress programme in order to impress on the minds of the people the simple truth that, without its abolition, swaraj cannot be won. Even if, however, we could get swaraj today, we would still have this problem with us. If anyone promised to give us swaraj on condition that I gave up working for the abolition of untouchability, I would reply without a moment's hesitation that I did not want such swaraj. To let the people cling to this practice means, for me, renouncing my Hinduism. Though physically I shall be at Juhu at the time of the Conference, you may rest assured that in spirit I shall be with you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

[1] This was sent to Vithal Laxman Phadke, who presided over the Conference.

23. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

Wednesday [*May 14, 1924*][1]

CHI. DEVDAS[2],

There is a heart-rending letter from Ba. I do not know what my duty is. If the children are there and if you think that they ought to be brought here, do bring them. I hope you have completely recovered.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8814

24. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

ANDHERI POST,
Vaisakha Sud 10 [*May 14, 1924*][3]

SUJNA[4] BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I cannot act in regard to the Akalis in the way you think. The rule that even a mother does not serve food to her child unless it asks for it applies to all my activities. If it is the will of God, He will use me as an instrument. He holds the threads in His hands. I am but one of the threads.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3178. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] The letter was presumably written from Juhu. The exact date is not ascertainable. May 14 was a Wednesday.

[2] Devdas Gandhi (1900-57); Gandhiji's youngest son, was associated with Gandhiji in most of his public activities and suffered imprisonment; editor, *The Hindustan Times*, 1940-57

[3] *Vaisakha Sud* 10 fell on this date.

[4] Literally, learned

25. *LETTER TO V. G. DESAI*

Vaisakha Sud 10 [*May 14, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I got your article. I shall see that your suggestions are carried out. In one place I have added the word "Indian". I am omitting the paragraph on vegetarian food. It is futile to think that under the swaraj of the immediate future everyone will become a vegetarian. Since you have given an English rendering of Tagore's poem, I shall not give in *Y.I.* the meaning of its Gujarati rendering. If I get your article translated into Gujarati, I shall include it there. I am not at all surprised by the wonderful things which take place between you two, since both of you are wonderful. I could go as far as Delhi, but how could I go further?[2] I have written to Abhechandbhai.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I destroyed the letter about Anandshankar immediately after reading it.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6005. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

26. *NOTES*

FREE TRADE *v.* PROTECTION

Apropos of the contemplated protection for Tata Steel Works, I have been asked to state my own views on protection. Of what use they can possibly be, at the present moment, I do not know; nor do I know the merits of the proposal regarding the Steel Works. But I take the opportunity of dispelling the illusion that I am inimical to capital and that I would destroy machinery and its products if I had the power. The fact is that I am a confirmed protectionist. Free trade may be good for England which dumps down her manufactures among helpless people and wishes her wants to be supplied from outside at the cheapest rate. But free

[1] The postmark carries this date.

[2] In a figurative sense

trade has ruined India's peasantry in that it has all but destroyed her cottage industry. Moreover, no new trade can compete with foreign trade without protection. Natal nursed her sugar industry by both bounty and import duty. Germany developed beet sugar by a system of bounties. I would any day welcome protection for mill industry, although I give and would always give preference to hand-spun khaddar. Indeed, I would give protection to all useful industries. Much of my opposition to the Government would abate if I found that it was truly solicitous for India's economic and moral welfare. Let the Government protect the cloth industry to the point of prohibition of all foreign cloth, let it popularize the charkha by making all its purchases of cloth in khaddar, let it abolish without regard to revenue the drink and the drug traffic, and cut down the army expenditure to the extent of the loss of that revenue. When such a happy event takes place, my opposition will lose its point. It will pave the way for a real discussion of Reforms. To me the two steps will be a striking sign of change of heart which must precede any honourable settlement.

A Full Stop

I have received several ably-argued letters on Maulana Mohamed Ali's[1] comparison between the creed of a Mussalman and that of a Hindu. For[2], in spite of my correspondents, I must adhere to the proposition that the Maulana has done nothing more than comparing the two creeds and preferring his own to mine. Able, instructive and interesting though some of the letters before me are, I must resist the temptation of publishing them. The country has much more important work before it than following a clever theological or even philosophical discussion. The only reason for my devoting the space of *Young India* to a defence of the Maulana Sahib's position was, if possible, to avoid an unnecessary increase in the prevailing bitterness between Hindus and Mussalmans.[3] I would not have cared, merely out of regard for a friend, to devote the space of a public journal to a defence of the Maulana. After having gone through the letters before me, I see no cause to revise my opinion. And I do not share the opinion expressed by one of the correspondents that the Maulana has betrayed ill will against Hindus and that there is no chance now of Hindu-

[1] 1871-1931; journalist and politician; led the Khilafat delegation to England in 1920; President, Indian National Congress, at Cocanada, 1923

[2] Presumbly, a slip for 'But'.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 484-6.

Muslim union. That union is coming in spite of the present ferment and in spite of us all. Even if the Maulana was not a lover of the union but its enemy in disguise, the position will not be altered. We are but straws in the hands of God. He can blow us where He pleases. We cannot oppose His will. He has made us all to unite, not to remain apart for ever. I wish I could infect my correspondents with my hope and faith. Then they will find no cause for distrusting the Maulana. Anyway, my correspondents will forgive me for not publishing or [having] any further dealing with correspondence on the Maulana Sahib's theological views.

Learning Urdu and Spinning

Mr. George Joseph writes from Trivandrum Central Jail:

> We are a pretty happy family and are getting on cordially enough with the authorities. Generally speaking, the conditions are nearly the same as those for "politicals" in the United Provinces jails in the early part of 1922.
>
> I have got the spinning-wheel in, and am doing three hours at it every day. The cotton now in my possession came from a friend in Madura, all carded and done in slivers. When the stock is exhausted, I intend getting in a Travancore variety of cotton in the crude state and getting it into shape myself. That should make me fairly competent in the auxiliary processes. As for Hindi, the position is this: When I was imprisoned in 1922, I did a good deal of work in Urdu, and I flatter myself that I know as much of the language as is likely to be useful. I can read and understand Urdu up to a reasonable standard (newspapers, current prose literature, easy poetry, etc.). Hindi I don't propose doing separately. I have sent for my Urdu books and shall devote a certain amount of time increasing my knowledge of the tongue.

A Plea for Punctuality

A correspondent, writing on beautiful swadeshi paper manufactured in the Nizam Dominions, writes:

> May I bring to your notice that some of the leaders are not punctual at the notified time of their lecture. This gives a bad lesson to the public who is already suffering from unpunctuality. Besides, it creates an unpleasantness among the audience towards the lecturer and consequently the lecturer does not command respect in the meeting as he would otherwise. It also gives a bad impression to those who do not believe in our being fit for swaraj. This is my repeated experience of certain meetings in Bombay and what I have said above is what I felt myself and heard others talking.

Organizers of public meetings please take note.

Living on Spinning and Weaving

In sending an account of his tour in Chittagong Acharya Roy says:

> I am enclosing an account of a tour in Chittagong where I went recently. You will be glad to learn that the field is very good there in the interior and it only requires an organization to develop it.
>
> While on tour I met with a gentleman who, I was given to understand, was an engineer. He has become a cultivator now ploughing his own field, sowing and reaping. His household needs are met by the manual labour of the members of his family who spin and weave for themselves.
>
> You need not reply to this letter. I know you are busy with important correspondence. I only let you know something about Chittagong which will please you. You are having plenty of worry—a little good news may act as a dose of medicine during your convalescence.

What the engineer family is reported to be doing can be done by every Congress worker, whether lawyer, school-master or other. He need not then worry about other Congress work. The engineer is, I am sure, doing far more successful propaganda than many an orator without a living faith in khaddar, thundering to the people on its virtue.

The report sent by Dr. Roy is equally instructive. It shows that hundreds of Mussalman women have been doing spinning for generations. They gin and card their own cotton. They weave their own yarn. The cotton is all brought from the neighbouring hills. The report states that the cotton is all bought up by merchants for export. Is it not tragic to think that, whilst there are thousands of spinners who can make use of cotton, they should be left idle and cotton should be sent abroad to be spun and woven there and then brought back to us as cloth? Fortunately, Dr. Roy and his workers are making strenuous effort to have sufficient cotton stored for the requirements of local spinners.

The report also describes the carding bow used in those parts and says that it came out victorious in a competition with the Bardoli bow. The gut of the Suchia bow (the local bow is named after a Chittagong village named Suchia) is made of fibres of pine-apple leaves and is supposed to last a week. It is surprising with what simple and cheap materials the finest processes can be gone through.

Treatment of Mr. Majli

The Editor, *Young India*,

DEAR SIR,

In your issue of the 3rd April, you published a letter from Mr. Majli of Belgaum which states that while he was in prison he "was not given spinning as stated on behalf of the Government but twisting yarn (1 lb. a day)," that he was "kept in utter seclusion under lock for all the 24 hours of the day except for 15 minutes walking;" and that although he was ill he was given food which he could not digest.[1]

You will no doubt be glad to learn, and I hope you will see your way to publish, the real facts of the case.

The real facts are that Mr. Majli was employed in twisting and spinning, i.e., spinning thread or yarn by means of a wheel; that he was confined in a large room adjoining his cell along with two associates, one of whom was an ex-Congressman; and that he was given an hour's exercise daily—half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening, and that he was given food as below:

(a) Admitted into jail on 23-10-23 and was given ordinary diet from that date onwards up to 2-12-23.

(b) In-patient for malaria from 3-12-23 to 13-12-23. During this period he was given milk diet.

(c) Convalescent from 14-12-23 to 28-12-23. Ordinary diet and one pound milk in lieu of dhal.

(d) From 28-12-23 to 4-1-24 ordinary diet.

(e) From 5-1-24 to 17-1-24 rice diet in lieu of ordinary diet, on account of some dyspepsia.

(f) From 18-1-24 to 29-1-24 ordinary diet.

(g) From 30-1-24 to 17-2-24, on which date he was released, he was on milk diet plus a loaf of bread and one ounce butter.

Yours faithfully,
(SD) ILLEGIBLE
AG. DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION

7th May 1924
BOMBAY

I gladly publish the foregoing. I do not propose to worry Mr. Majli in his present state of health. Nor, as I said in my note, did I wish to make the treatment a matter of complaint. But I must say that on two points at least Mr. Majli is substantially correct. Mr. Majli does not deny that he was given 'twist-spinning'.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 345.

But 'twist-spinning' means 'twisting yarn'. Perhaps the acting Director of Information does not know that there is no process known as 'twist-spinning'. You spin or twist yarn on the wheel. Mr. Majli wanted spinning which was a matter of duty and pleasure with him. But he was given twisting which was no matter of pleasure and which was much harder than spinning. That he was locked up is also evidently true. That there were two companions with him does not alter the fact of the lock-up. Only a prisoner knows what lock-up, especially in the day time, means, whether with or without company.

From Sarojini Devi

The reader will be glad to share with me the following from Mrs. Sarojini Naidu[1]:

> The Indian Ocean is chanting immemorial hymns to the morning sun and the mountains bear witness to the covenant that great dreamers have made from their sunlit peaks with God to make the land of South Africa a goodly heritage of noble ideals and high traditions for unborn generations. But today the facts are otherwise. In the shadow of these very mountains and within sound of this very sea, the men who have in their keeping the destiny of South Africa are betraying their trust and making of their House of Assembly, that should be a temple of justice and freedom, a market-place to barter away the birthright of posterity for a brief period of power built on prejudice and authority based on oppression. Still my heart is not dismayed and my faith in the balance of ultimate issues remains unshaken. And I have not been afraid to proclaim that faith or that vision. It has made the protagonists of an impossible white South Africa angry and alarmed. But to the coloured people of South Africa it has brought an awakening and a new hope.
>
> You have been kept in touch, I know, with the course of my mission here in laconic Press cables. I have according to my capacity and opportunity done my best and in spite of a prejudiced Press and ignorant legislators, I have been able to win not hundreds but thousands of friends for the Indian cause from all sections and ranks of South African communities. The African races and even the difficult 'Colonial' people have been moved to enthusiasm and indignation, and a sense of kinship and community of suffering and destiny. How the white races have resented my expression "a University of oppression" as applied to South

[1] 1879-1949; poetess, orator and social reformer; President, Indian National Congress, 1925

Africa. Yet it is a "University of oppression" to discipline and perfect the spirit of the non-European people.

My interview with the Strong Man[1] of the Empire was very interesting. He was full of his famous charm and magnetism and withal apparently simple and sweet; but what depth of subtlety and diplomacy are hidden behind that suavity and simplicity! My impression of him is that he was designed by nature to be among the world's greatest, but he has dwarfed himself to be a small man in robe of authority in South Africa; it is the tragedy of a man who does not or cannot rise to the full height of his pre-destined spiritual stature. Before I leave South Africa on the 27th of this month, we are holding an emergency conference to consolidate the political work and outline a scheme of action—may be of sacrifice. I shall spend a fortnight in East Africa *en route* for India to finish my work there before I return home.

A Tribute from an Englishman

Rev. Charles Phillips[2] is one of the most respected among Christian missionaries in South Africa. The following is his tribute to her work which I take from his letter recently received:

> It is a very long time since any communication has passed between you and me. I have felt every moment of your time was too sacred to be spent on replying to any letter such as I could write. But Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has been here and I have seen much of her and she has laid upon me the solemn charge that I should write to you at once. She left yesterday and today is at Maritzburg. After "circuiting" to Cape Town she is coming back here and then I shall see her again. I could not however see her again with a clear conscience unless I could tell her that I had fulfilled her request. This is my apology for troubling you with a letter from me. I could write all day and still leave much unsaid. Therefore I must try to write *multum in parvo* as far as I can. I need not say very much about the wonderful success which has attended her mission to Johannesburg. Others will write to you full and detailed accounts but they will give you no adequate account. She has been your alter ego, *Gandhi Redivivus*, bringing back to us something of the idealism and lofty spiritual purpose which we perceived so long ago. We thank God for her visit, for her burning words, for the divine truths and the Christ-like thoughts she has impressed upon us. The whole of the Indian community has risen to her call and a large part of the white community as well.

[1] The reference evidently is to General Smuts.
[2] Congregational minister in the Transvaal; *vide* Vol. XIV.

Not Inconsistent

A correspondent draws my attention to what he regards is an inconsistency between my statement to the Press issued after my release regarding the Gurdwara movement and the advice given by me just after Nankana Sahib tragedy. This is the statement[1] I made after my release:

> My friends (Akalis) informed me to my surprise that there was a general misapprehension in the Punjab that after the Nankana tragedy, I had expressed an opinion that the Gurdwara movement should have been postponed till after the attainment of swaraj. I never expressed the opinion attributed to me as can be amply verified from my writings and speeches at the time.

The correspondent quotes the following statement[2] from my letter to the Sikhs after the tragedy and regards it as inconsistent with the first:

> No one can be more eager for real reform in our temples and removal of all abuse than I. But let us not be party to measures that may be worse than the reform sought to be brought about. There are two ways open to you (Khalsa): either to establish arbitration boards for settlement of possession of all Gurdwaras or *postponement of the question till the attainment of swaraj.*

The italics are the correspondent's. I can see nothing inconsistent between the two statements. The first refers to the general movement and says that I never advised postponement till after the attainment of swaraj. The second advised postponement of the question of *possession* of Gurdwaras till the attainment of swaraj, if it could not be settled by arbitration. In this letter I have discussed the propriety of taking possession by show of force. And my advice was that if arbitration did not succeed, and the choice lay between possession by show of force or postponement, my advice was for postponement. The curious may refer to the letter itself which he will see in his file of *Young India* for 1921, and he will find that I have discussed in it the question of show of force. Nothing that has happened since has altered the view taken by me in that letter. I am convinced that no reform can be achieved by show of force. I know that there must be two parties to arbitration. If the other party does not agree, a non-co-operator will not seek the protection of a British court of law. But if he must choose between show of force and resort to court of law, i.e., if he is not

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 235.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 402.

prepared to sacrifice for the time being what he considers his right, I have no hesitation in saying that he must go to law even though it be British rather than seek to gain his purpose by show of force.

Religiously Spinning

Mr. P. W. Sebastian, a Vaikom satyagrahi prisoner, writes from Trivandrum Central Jail:

> It is now some months since I heard from you. I had hardly time to write to you about my jail experience in Cochin before I was clapped in Travancore Jail. You know I was imprisoned for six months by the Cochin Government on a security proceeding. It was hardly two months since I came out when I was arrested along with Sjt. George Joseph and others in connection with Vaikom Satyagraha and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. Some of my friends and myself are treated as political prisoners and the authorities see to all our wants and comforts. We are accommodated in spacious rooms and provided with cots, bedding, tables, chairs, writing materials, books and newspapers. We are allowed to use our own clothes and we are using khaddar. We have our spinning-wheels inside the Jail and some of us spin with a religious zeal. The authorities are very obliging and solicitous about our comforts.

I tender my congratulations to the Travancore State for their handsome treatment of the prisoners who have gone to jail for conscience' sake. Let me hope that not some but all the satyagrahis will religiously use the spinning-wheel. I would advise them, too, to learn carding and, if permitted, weaving also. They can learn all these things, if they will give every spare moment of the precious time they have to carding, spinning and weaving.

The Moplah Relief

I am glad to be able to inform the reader that the first response to my appeal was from a Bohra gentleman who sent me a cheque for Rs. 500. I have already sent the amount to Mr. Yakoob Hasan. The next amount is from a widow friend. It is Rs. 10. Her friend has given Rs. 2. Another Hindu has forwarded Rs. 10 from Madras. The *Young India* office has received another Rs. 5 from a Hindu gentleman of Bareilly.

Letter from Lalaji

Lala Lajpat Rai says in the course of a letter written during the voyage:

> The symbol of non-violence that I was wearing at the time of embarkation met with violence the very first day of my voyage. There

are about a score of Indians on board this ship. Only two of us had the Gandhi caps on at the time of going aboard. All eyes were on us and one could see signs of anger on some faces. At dinner time I left my cap on the hat-rack outside. After dinner I searched for it in vain. It had disappeared. It was not worth stealing. So the only conclusion one could come to was that it was stored[1] into the sea. I am not sorry for it as the act must have given satisfaction to the doer. But I was determined to keep on. Yesterday again I left my cap (another) outside the dining-saloon at the same place. This time it was not touched and so the episode is over.

I am already feeling better. The sea breeze and the rest are doing me good. I wish you also could tear yourself from your responsibilities and take a complete rest outside India.

It is evident the khaddar cap has still many a stiff battle in front of it.

"YOUNG INDIA" AND "NAVAJIVAN"

A correspondent writes to me about the donation for khaddar production of the profits of Rs. 50,000 of the Navajivan Press, and says that the profits show that the prices of the weeklies could have been considerably reduced so as to make them available to a larger public. I give below extracts from the letter.

Recently an announcement was made in the Press that the Navajivan Press had made a profit of about Rs. 50,000 and that that sum was to be spent on some charitable purposes. This shows that by the grace of God the Press is not in loss and the management is to be congratulated on that account.

But I and many others in this line fail to understand why the price of the paper of 8 pages with such rough paper is so very exorbitant in spite of the low cost of paper prevalent at present. Two annas for a copy of *Young India* is too much for the general reading public of India, and *Navajivan* for as. 1¼ is also too much. India is a very poor country and that is an acknowledged fact. If they are making profits, is it not fair that prices should be decreased and thus make them available for the big masses?

In this connection I may say that the noteworthy English weeklies such as *Saturday Review*, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, *The American Nation*, *The Spectator*, etc., are far cheaper even at the rate of 6d., since they contain more than three times the number of pages. If it is not possible to decrease the prices of the weeklies under your control, can you not conveniently manage to increase the number of pages?

[1] Presumbly a slip for 'shoved'

> Some of us would believe that, even if *Young India* and *Navajivan* are sold at 2 to 3 pice, they will not be under loss so long as they are edited by your good self. If you think that you owe an explanation to the public in this connection, you may explain this through your paper.
>
> Now suppose that the papers are not making profits nor are likely to make any even at the prevailing prices of as. 2/- and as. 1½, can you not manage to put some amount of the profit of the Press in these papers and thus make them cheap?

I have consulted the manager about the subject matter of the letter and both he and I have come to the conclusion that the prices could not be safely reduced for the following reasons:

1. Profits are a precarious item.

2. Reduction of the prices will make no difference in the number of subscribers.

3. The masses do not count as readers because they cannot read.

4. My editing, though it has somewhat increased the number of subscribers, has not made any material increase. The papers are by no means as popular as they were before, because, perhaps, of the subsidence of excitement. *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan* have not yet begun to pay their way, and unless English readers of *Young India* and Hindi readers of *Hindi Navajivan* interest themselves in the upkeep of these weeklies and secure more subscribers, the question of stopping them may soon arise.

5. It is a bad policy to print a cheap newspaper by making profits from other work. I want the readers to be just as much interested in the upkeep of the papers as the manager and the editor are.

6. It is better that the readers become direct participators in the donation of profits than that they get their paper cheap.

7. If there is a public that does not buy the papers by reason of the prices, it is open to well-to-do subscribers, interested in the circulation of the views and policies advocated in the papers, to order as many copies as they choose and, if there is a large demand, lower prices will certainly be quoted for them.

8. In view of the suggestion in clause 7, the question of the high prices is not a matter of moment since the public benefit by every single pie of the profits.

9. The size of the papers cannot very well be increased, if only because I have but limited capacity and the papers have only

a limited ambition. The public do not want from me a larger weekly letter than they are getting at present.

Young India, 15-5-1924

27. *EMPIRE GOODS BOYCOTT*

It is curious how the question of the Empire goods boycott continues to challenge public attention from time to time. From the standpoint of non-violent non-co-operation, it seems to me to be wholly indefensible. It is retaliation pure and simple and, as such, punitive. So long, therefore, as the Congress holds to *non-violent* non-co-operation, so long must boycott of British, as distinguished from other foreign goods, be ruled out. And if I am the only Congressman holding the view, I must move a resolution at the next Congress repealing the resolution in the matter carried at the last Special Session.

But, for the moment, I propose to discuss not the ethics but the utility of the retaliatory boycott. The knowledge that even the Liberals joined the Boycott campaign cannot make one shrink from the inquiry. On the contrary, if they come to believe with me that the retaliatory boycott that they and the Congress took up was not only ineffective, but was one more demonstration of our impotent rage and waste of precious energy, I would appeal to them to take up with zeal and determination the boycott of *all* foreign cloth and replacing same not with Indian mill-cloth but with hand-spun khaddar.

I have had the pleasure of reading the report of the Boycott Committee. It must be, has remained, the last word on the utmost that can be done in the shape of boycott of British or Empire goods. The Report, in my opinion, presents a formidable case, not for but against such boycott. It frankly states that the bulk of the Empire goods, such, for instance, as railway material, is imported by the Government or English firms; that the trifles such as scents, soaps, boots imported are mostly consumed by those easy-going, luxury-loving Indians who are never likely to take to the boycott. It will be found on a calm consideration of the figures that even if the boycott of the trifles was scrupulously carried out by every Congress man and every Liberal, the amount would not be, at the outside, more than one crore of rupees per year. He must be a brave optimist who could believe that the Kenya Englishman or English-

men in general, would be made to change their policy by reason of such boycott.

'But,' says the critic, 'see what a flutter was created in Cheapside when the Empire goods boycott resolution of the Bombay Municipal Corporation was cabled free of charge by Reuter.' Surely we know enough of the British trade methods not to be unduly elated by such flutters. They are often put on in order to inflame the gullible public against 'the unscrupulous Indian agitators who are bent upon injuring England'. When the excitement is not put on, it is a symptom of the British mercantile sensitiveness to every commercial fluctuation or movement. It is by such sensitiveness that it ever remains prepared for emergencies of every conceivable type. I would ask the public, therefore, never to rely upon the excitements or approbations from England, or, for that matter, from any foreign State. Their fear or praise of our action can never secure us in our position if our action which is either feared or praised is not, in itself, substantially effective.

If our rage did not blind us, we should be ashamed of the boycott resolution when we realized that we depended upon British goods for some of our national requirements. When we may not do without English books and English medicines, should we boycott English watches because we can procure Geneva watches? And if we will not do without English books because we need them, how shall we expect the importer of British watches or perfumes to sacrifice his trade? My very efficient English nurse, whom I loved to call 'tyrant' because she insisted in all loving ways on my taking more food and more sleep than I did, with a smile curling round her lips and insidious twinkle in her eyes, gently remarked after I was safely removed to a private ward, escorted by the house-surgeon and herself: "As I was shading you with my umbrella I could not help smiling that you, a fierce boycotter of everything British, probably owed your life to the skill of a British surgeon, handling British surgical instruments, administering British drugs, and to the ministrations of a British nurse. Do you know that as we brought you here, the umbrella that shaded you was of British make?" The gentle nurse, as she finished the last triumphant sentence, evidently expected my complete collapse under her loving sermon. But, happily, I was able to confound her self-assurance by saying: "When will you people begin to know things as they are? Do you know that I do not boycott anything merely because it is British? I simply boycott all foreign cloth because the dumping down of foreign cloth in India has reduced millions of my people to pauperism." I was even able to interest her in the khaddar movement.

Probably she became a convert to it. Anyway, she understood the propriety, the necessity and the utility of khaddar, but she could only laugh (and rightly) against the wholly ineffective and meaningless boycott of British goods.

If the champions of this retaliatory boycott will look at their homes and their own belongings, they will, I have no doubt, discover the ludicrousness of their position even as my nurse friend did, under the supposition that I belonged to that boycott school.

I yield to no one in my desire to see justice done to our countrymen in Kenya or to win swaraj at the earliest possible moment. But I know that angry impatience can only frustrate the very end we have in view. What is it then in which all parties —Liberals, pro-Councilwallas, No-changers and others—can successfully combine to enable us to achieve our end? I have already given the answer. But I must examine it fully in the next issue and show why it furnishes the only feasible solution.

Young India, 15-5-1924

28. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES – V*

Possibilities of Reform

It has been my invariable experience that good evokes good, evil — evil; and that therefore, if the evil does not receive the corresponding response, it ceases to act, dies of want of nutrition. Evil can only live upon itself. Sages of old, knowing this law, instead of returning evil for evil, deliberately returned good for evil and killed it. Evil lives nevertheless, because many have not taken advantage of the discovery, though the law underlying it acts with scientific precision. We are too lazy to work out in terms of the law the problems that face us and, therefore, fancy that we are too weak to act up to it. The fact is, that the moment the truth of the law is realized, nothing is so easy as to return good for evil. It is *the* one quality that distinguishes man from the brute. It is man's natural law not to retaliate. Though we have the human form, we are not truly human till we have fully realized the truth of the law and acted up to it. The law admits of no escape.

I cannot recall a single instance in which it has not answered. Utter strangers have within my experience irresistibly responded to it. In all the South African jails through which I passed, the officials who were at first most unfriendly to me became uniformly friendly because I did not retaliate. I answered their bitterness

with sweetness. This does not mean that I did not fight injustice. On the contrary, my South African jail experiences were a continuous fight against it, and in most cases it was successful. The longer Indian experience has but emphasized the truth and the beauty of non-violent conduct. It was the easiest thing for me to acerbate the authorities at Yeravda. For instance, I could have answered the Superintendent in his own coin when he made the insulting remarks described in my letter to Hakim Saheb.[1] I would have in that case lowered myself in my own estimation and confirmed the Superintendent in his suspicion that I was a cantankerous and mischievous politician. But the experiences related in that letter were trivialities compared to what was to follow. Let me recall a few of them.

A European warder I knew suspected me. He thought it was his business to suspect every prisoner. As I did not want to do any the slightest thing without the knowledge of the Superintendent, I had told him that, if a prisoner passing by salaamed, I would return the salaam and that I was giving to the convict-warder in charge of me all the food that I could not eat. The European warder knew nothing of the conversation with the Superintendent. He once saw a prisoner salaam me. I returned the salaam. He saw us both in the act, but only took from the prisoner his ticket. It meant that the poor man would be reported. I at once told the warder to report me too, as I was equally guilty with the poor man. He simply told me he had to do his duty. Instead of reporting the warder for his officiousness, but in order to protect a fellow-prisoner, I merely mentioned to the Superintendent the incident of salaaming without the conversation I had with the warder. The latter recognized that I meant no ill whatsoever to him, and from that time forward ceased to suspect me. On the contrary, he became very friendly.

I was subject to search like the other prisoners. I never objected. And so, daily before the lock-up, a regular search took place for many months. Occasionally, a jailor used to come who was exceptionally rude. I had nothing but my loin-cloth on. There was, therefore, no occasion for him to touch my person. But he did touch the groins. Then he began overhauling the blankets and other things. He touched my pot with his boots. All this was proving too much for me and my anger was about to get the better of me. Fortunately, I regained self-possession and said nothing to the young jailor. The question, however, still remained whether I

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 129-36.

should or should not report him. This happened a fairly long time after my admission to Yeravda. The Superintendent was, therefore, likely to take severe notice of the jailor's conduct if I reported him. I decided to the contrary. I felt that I must pocket these personal rudenesses. If I reported him, the jailor was likely to lose his job. Instead, therefore, of reporting him, I had a talk with him. I told him how I had felt his rudeness, how I had at first thought of reporting him and how in the end I decided merely to talk to him. He took my conversation in good part and felt grateful. He admitted, too, that his conduct was wrong, though he said he did not act with the intention of wounding my susceptibilities. He certainly never molested me again. Whether he improved his general conduct in regard to other prisoners I do not know.

But what was most striking was perhaps the result of my intervention in connection with the floggings and the hunger-strikes. The first hunger-strike was that of the Sikh life-sentence prisoners. They would not eat food without the restoration of their sacred loin-cloth and without the permission to them to cook their own food. As soon as I came to know of these strikes, I asked to be allowed to meet them. But the permission could not be granted. It was a question of prestige and jail discipline. As a matter of fact, there was no question of either, if the prisoners could be regarded as human beings just as susceptible to finer forces as their species outside. My seeing them, I feel sure, would have saved the authorities a great deal of trouble, worry and public expense, and would also have saved the Sikh prisoners the painful, prolonged fast. But, I was told, if I could not see them, I could send them 'wireless messages'! I must explain this special expression. Wireless messages in prison parlance means unauthorized messages sent by one prisoner to another with or without the knowledge of the officials. Every official knows and must connive at such interchange of messages. Experience has shown them that it is impossible to guard against or to detect such breaches of prison regulations. I may say that I was scrupulously exact about such messages. I cannot recall a single occasion when I sent a 'wireless' for my own purpose. In every case it was in the interest of prison discipline. The result was, I think, that the officials had ceased to distrust me and, if they had it in their power, they would have availed themselves of my offer of intervention in such cases. But the superior authority, so jealous of its prestige, would not hear of it.

In the above instance, I did set in motion the wireless apparatus, but it was hardly effective. The fast was broken after many

days, but I am unable to say whether it was at all due to my messages.

This was the first occasion when I felt that I should intervene in the interest of humanity.

The next occasion was when certain Mulshi Peta prisoners were flogged for short task.[1] I need not go into the painful story at length. Some of these prisoners were youngsters. It is likely that they had wilfully done much less task than they could have. They were put on grinding. Somehow or other these prisoners were not classed political as the swaraj prisoners were. Whatever the cause, they were mostly given grinding as their task. Grinding has an unnecessary bad odour about it. I am aware that all labour is irksome when it has to be done as a task and under supervision not always gentle. But a prisoner who courts imprisonment for conscience sake should look upon his task as a matter of pride and pleasure. He should put his whole soul into the labour that may be allotted to him. The Mulshi Peta prisoners, or for that matter the others, as a body were certainly not of this type. It was a new experience for them all and they did not know what was their duty as satyagrahis—whether to do the most or the least or not at all. The majority of the Mulshi Peta prisoners were perhaps indifferent. They had perhaps not given a thought to the thing. But they were mostly high-spirited men and youths. They would brook no *jo hukum* and, therefore, there was constant friction between them and the officials.

The crisis came at last. Major Jones became angry. He thought they were wilfully not doing their task. He wanted to make an example of them and ordered six of them to receive stripes. The flogging created a sensation in the prison. Everybody knew what was happening and why. I noticed the prisoners as they were passing by. I was deeply touched. One of them recognized me and bowed. In the 'separate', the 'political' prisoners intended to strike as a protest. I have paid my tribute to Major Jones. Here it is my painful duty to criticize his action. In spite of his sterling good nature, love of justice, and even partiality for prisoners as against officials, he was hasty in action. His decisions were sometimes, therefore, erroneous. It would not matter, as he is equally ready to repent, if it was not for sentences like flogging which once administered are beyond recall. I discussed the matter gently with him, but I know that I could not persuade him that he was wrong in punishing prisoners for short task. I could not persuade him to

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 156.

think that every short task was not proof of wilfulness. He did indeed admit that there always was a margin for error, but his experience was that it was negligible. Unfortunately, like so many officers, he believed in the efficacy of flogging.

The political prisoners, having taken a serious view of the case, were on the point of hunger-striking. I came to know of it. I felt that it was wrong to hunger-strike without an overwhelming case being made out. The prisoners could not take the law into their own hands and claim to judge every case for themselves. I asked Major Jones again for permission to see them. But that was not to be allowed. I have already published the correspondence[1] on the subject which I invite the studious reader to consult at the time of reading these notes. I had, therefore, again to fall back upon the 'wireless'. The hunger-strike and a crisis were averted as a direct result of the 'wireless'. But there was an unpleasant incident arising from the matter. Mr. Jeramdas[2] had delivered my message contrary to the regulations. Mr. Jeramdas saw, as he had to see, the political prisoners concerned. They were purposely kept in separate blocks. He therefore 'wandered' from his own to the other blocks with the knowledge of the convict officers and one of the European jailors. He told them that he knew that he was breaking the regulations and that they were free to report him. He was reported in due course. Major Jones thought that he could not but take notice of the breach although he knew that it was for a good cause, and although he even appreciated Mr. Jeramdas's work. The punishment awarded was seven days' solitary confinement. On my coming to know of this, I invited Major Jones to award at least the same penalty to me as to Mr. Jeramdas. For he (Mr. Jeramdas) had broken the regulations at my instance. Major Jones said that in the interest of discipline he was bound to take notice of an open defiance brought officially to his notice. But he was not only not displeased with what Mr. Jeramdas had done, but he was glad that, even at the risk of being punished, he saw the prisoners who were about to hunger-strike and thus saved an ugly situation. There was no occasion, he saw, to punish me as I had not left my boundary and as my instigation of Mr. Jeramdas was not officially brought to his notice. I recognized the force of Major

[1] The reference is to the letters addressed by Gandhiji to the Superintendent, Yeravda Jail, and the Governor of Bombay. For these letters along with Gandhiji's notes thereon, published in *Young India*, 6-3-1924, *vide* Vol. XXIII.

[2] Jairamdas Doulatram (b. 1892); Secretary, Sind Provincial Congress Committee; later became Minister of Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Governor of Bihar and Assam

Jones's argument and attitude and did not further press for punishment.

I must consider in the next chapter another incident still more telling and important from the satyagrahi standpoint and then consider the moral results of non-violent action and the ethics of fasting.

Young India, 15-5-1924

29. *MESSAGE TO RAVISHANKAR VYAS*[1]

May 15, 1924

I have still not forgotten what you told me about your first fruitful meeting with the robbers. Today, you have advanced far beyond that. You have bound the Dharala brothers and sisters to you with bonds of love. I pray that your bond with them may become stronger and that you may be the instrument of all-round improvement in the conditions of these brothers and sisters of ours.

I am certain that a community which throws up robbers and wicked men has only itself to blame. It is not as if robbers like being what they are. They take to robbing under pressure of circumstances. A robber becomes confirmed in his ways when the community punishes him and in this way the disease spreads. If we cultivate friendly relations with robbers and others like them, they realize their error and reform themselves.

You are engaged in this invaluable work. I know that all Dharalas are not robbers. Many of them are upright men, but, in our ignorance, we have kept them away from us. I regard your work as of supreme importance. One may say that it holds the key to India's regeneration.

Let your love not become blind. Persuade the Dharala brothers and sisters to take up some [honest] work. I am sure you are exerting yourself to see that they wear khadi woven by themselves from yarn which they themselves have spun, that they give up drinking and addiction to opium and other vices, that their children get education and the grown-ups learn *bhajans*[2] and *kirtans*[3]; even so, you

[1] Popularly known as Ravishankar Maharaj, and devoted to social reform among the Dharalas, a backward community in Gujarat, he presided over their meeting at Borsad.

[2] Devotional songs

[3] Devotional songs sung by a group to the accompaniment of music

should work harder still. May God, I pray, make the Conference a success and may He give you more strength for service.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

30. LETTER TO EMIL RONIGER[1]

POST ANDHERI,
May 15, 1924

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter. I have no copyright in connection with any of the works you mention. They are not even published by me. Strictly speaking, you should ask the various publishers for permission. I do not think there will be any objection to the proposed publication by you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

EMIL RONIGER, ESQ.
RHEIN FELDEN
(SWITZERLAND)

From a photostat : S.N. 8802

[1] Writing from Germany on April 2, Roniger had introduced himself as the author of a book on India in which he had written on Gandhiji. With the purpose of cultivating "the spirit of brotherhood, of self-restraint and of service" in Europe, he had established a 'Home of Friendship'. Roniger's proposal to Gandhiji was to publish in German language volumes containing a selection of *Young India* articles, *A Guide to Health*, *Ethical Religion*, J. J. Doke's *M. K. Gandhi*: *An Indian Patriot in South Africa*, and Gandhiji's speeches during the South African and Indian periods. In these Roniger sought exclusive German rights. He also wanted to publish a *Review of Ahimsa* which would carry translations of articles from *Young India*. S.N. 8644

31. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

POST ANDHERI,
May 15, 1924

DEAR MR. KELKAR[1],

Here is the reminiscence for Mr. Bapat. I wish I could give more because there are many. I ask you and Mr. Bapat, however, to have pity on me. I have really not a moment to spare. I must choose some other occasion and another medium when I have opportunity for reducing all the reminiscences that I have of the Lokamanya[2].

I am not writing separately to Mr. Bapat, as yours was the last letter in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. N. C. KELKAR
POONA

[ENCLOSURE]

REMINISCENCES OF LOKAMANYA TILAK

I have the most vivid recollection of my very first meeting with the Lokamanya. This was in 1896[3] when I was almost totally unknown in India. It was in connection with the cause of Indians in South Africa that I went to Poona to organize a public meeting. I was an utter stranger in Poona. I knew the public men only by names. Mr. Sohoni whom I knew as my brother's friend and who had given me shelter took me to the Lokamanya. After putting me at ease, he asked me the cause of my visit. I at once told him what my mission was. The Lokamanya said: "I see, you are a stranger in Poona. You do not know the public men. Nor do you know anything of local differences. I must, however, tell you that there are two political bodies here. One is

[1] Narasinh Chintaman Kelkar (1872-1947); journalist, politician and a close associate of Tilak; sometime Secretary of the Indian National Congress; helped Gandhiji in revising the constitution of the Congress in 1920; a leader of the Swarajist Party

[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); political leader, scholar and writer, popularly known as 'Lokamanya'; one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society, Poona, and of the newspapers the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta*

[3] The source has 1894, but the correct date is 1896; *vide* Vol. II, p. 136.

the Deccan Sabha, and the other is the Sarvajanik Sabha. Unfortunately, the two bodies do not meet on a common platform. If the meeting is organized by any one body, everybody must sympathize with your cause. Therefore, it must not be identified with any one political body. It is well that you have seen me. You must also see Mr. Gokhale[1] who belongs to the Deccan Sabha. I am sure he will give you the same advice that I am giving you. You must have a public meeting which is attended by all sections. You may tell Mr. Gokhale that no difficulty will be raised from my side. For such a meeting we must have a neutral chairman, who is also well known and carries weight. Dr. Bhandarkar is such a man in Poona. If you, therefore, see him too, and invite him to become president, telling him what I have told you and what Mr. Gokhale tells you. He has almost retired from public life. You must press him even if he hesitates. Your cause is very just. It is sure to commend itself to him. If you secure him as chairman, the rest will be easy. Do tell me in good time what happens. You may rely upon full assistance from me. I wish you every success."

I could not conceive any greater encouragement from men occupying the position that the Lokamanya did to a young man he had never met. It was a memorable meeting in my life, and the first impression that the Lokamanya gave me of himself persisted throughout the many meetings which I was privileged to have with him.[2]

From a photostat : S.N. 8803

[1] Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915); statesman and educationist; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and presided over its Banaras session in 1905; founded the Servants of India Society at Poona; visited South Africa in 1912 at Gandhiji's invitation.

[2] *Vide* also *An Autobiography*, Pt. II, Ch. XXVIII.

32. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Thursday [*May 15, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter.

I have done my duty. Now let things take their own course.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH
TAKHTESHWAR PLOT
BHAVNAGAR

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 6006. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

33. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Vaisakha Sud 12 [*May 16, 1924*][2]

CHI. MANI[3],

I have your letter. It would not at all be advisable for you to leave the sanatorium[4] by the 20th. You ought to stay there till at least the end of the month. How can I manage to go there? I must reach Sabarmati on the 29th.

If Vasumatibehn intends to go there, I shall let you know. There is very little chance, however.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne

[1] The postmark carries this date.

[2] Gandhiji returned to the Ashram on May 29, 1924, as indicated in the letter. *Vaisakha Sud* 12 fell on May 16.

[3] Daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel

[4] At Hajira in the Surat district of Gujarat

34. LETTER TO VITHALBHAI J. PATEL[1]

JUHU,
May 17, 1924

DEAR SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of [May 15]. In reply, I beg to state that the present state of my health will not permit me to bear the strain of a public appearance and ceremony at an early date. I hope, however, to be able to receive the address of the Corporation at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall some time in August. If you do not mind, I would fix the date later in consultation with you.[2]

I remain,
Yours truly,

THE HON'BLE VITHALBHAI J. PATEL
PRESIDENT
MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8811

35. LETTER TO NARASINHRAO BHOLANATH DIVETIA

Vaisakha Sud 13 [*May 17, 1924*][3]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I am relieved to hear that you are not offended. But I have already offered an apology in *Navajivan*; it must have been printed by now.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Narasinhraoni Rojnishi, p. 43

[1] This was in reply to V. J. Patel's letter of May 15, informing Gandhiji of the Bombay Municipal Corporation's resolution to present him an address of welcome.

[2] In his reply of July 19, Patel requested Gandhiji to fix a date prior to August 15. Gandhiji suggested August 9.

[3] The apology mentioned in the letter was published in *Navajivan*, 18-5-1924, along with the addressee's letter dated May 7, 1924. In 1924, *Vaisakha Sud* 13 fell on May 17.

36. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

[*May 17, 1924*][1]

CHI. MANI,

After we meet in Ahmedabad, we shall see whether or not it is necessary for you to take any medicine. You should not leave the place until you are quite fit. Vasumatibehn may leave the place on Monday and go there. Bhai . . . knows her house at Surat. He may go there and see if she has arrived. If she has, he may take her to Hajira. Are there any private houses available there on rent? I shall most probably have a wire sent to you. Vasumatibehn is at present taking injections. How is Durgabehn[2] doing? Won't she write to me? Yes, my hand does shake a little.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN VALLABHBHAI PATEL
ASAR SHETH'S SANATORIUM
HAJIRA, *via* SURAT

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne

37. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

BOMBAY,
Saturday, May 17, 1924

Our representative asked: Are you in a position to make any statement about your discussions with the deputation that has come to you from Vykom?

Mahatmaji replied in slow accents:

I think that our discussions are now practically closed and I am satisfied that the movement has been carried on by the organizers in an orderly and non-violent manner. The steadiness with which they have conducted it has drawn the attention of the whole of the Indian public. All this is certainly to the good, but after having fully discussed with the friends from Vykom the position, I still entertain the opinion that satyagraha should be confined to the

[1] As in the printed source
[2] Wife of Mahadev Desai

Hindus only and that, too, as far as possible to the volunteers drawn from Kerala, and, at the most, from the Madras Presidency. Satyagraha in its intensest form goes deeper and therefore necessarily covers a very small surface. Let me make my meaning clear. The purer the organizers, the stronger and more effective is their satyagraha and, therefore, when the organizers of satyagraha extend the boundary line, it is really an admission of one's weakness, not of the cause, but of the persons organized. I think I have said sufficiently in the pages of *Young India* to show why non-Hindus cannot possibly offer satyagraha in respect of a religious question which is exclusively Hindu. I believe that my friends have seen the force of my argument. If I could possibly persuade the Christian and Mohammedan sympathizers who had gone to jail as satyagrahis, I will ask them to tell the authorities that they offered satyagraha in error and that, therefore, if the authorities intended to discharge them they might do so because they would not court arrest in the cause of the untouchable Hindus. I am deliberately using the term untouchable Hindus, because I understand that among the Syrian Christians of Malabar there are untouchable Christians also. But as the present satyagraha is not being offered on behalf of the untouchable Christians, the sacrifice of Messrs Joseph, Sebastian and Abdur Rahim carries no merit with it.

So far as the Sikh kitchen is concerned, it is not only out of place but it is harmful to the cause and to the self-respect of the people of Kerala. Harmful to the cause because it weakens the strength of the sacrifice of the volunteers and it must unnecessarily irritate that portion of the orthodox Hindus who are hostile to the reform. It is harmful to the self-respect of the Kerala people because unthinkingly they partake of the food distributed by the Sikh friends. It can only be regarded as charity. I cannot but regard it as charity that a large number of people, who are well able to feed themselves, should feed themselves at the kitchen and unwillingly be partakers of charity of which they do not stand in need, and this I say irrespective of the fact whether Sikhs be regarded as a part of the Hindu society or not. I would expect the Kerala friends to have self-respect and courage enough courteously to decline such assistance even if *Sanatani* Hindus offered to establish a kitchen. I can conceive the possibility and necessity of such a kitchen in a famine-stricken area where people are starving.

As to the pecuniary help from outside, I do retain the opinion that the Kerala friends should neither seek nor receive, even if

it is offered unsought, pecuniary assistance from Hindus or others outside the Madras Presidency. They may, if they so need it, seek the pecuniary assistance only of the Hindus of the Madras Presidency. Of course, the Kerala people distributed all over India are bound, if they approve of the struggle, to send all the financial assistance that they can to the organizers of the movement.

My friends asked me whether I had expressed an opinion to the effect that the Kerala Congress Committee should not have taken up the question. My answer to them was that, if the question should have been taken up at all, the Congress Committee should have been the first body to take it up because it is pledged to bring about the removal of untouchability by all peaceful and legitimate means. But the Congress taking it up cannot and does not mean that non-Hindus can or ought to participate in satyagraha. They can only give their moral support.

I have no doubt whatsoever that, if the organizers continue the struggle in the same peaceful manner as they have done, accept the restrictions which I have suggested, and if they are thinking of sustaining the struggle for an indefinite period, their efforts must be crowned with success. I cannot, however, lay too much stress upon the fact that satyagraha is a process of conversion and, therefore, the organizers must ever aim at changing the heart of their opponents.

Q. Have you seen a cable sent by the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in India to the effect that you have decided to take the lead at the next Congress, on the platform for securing a majority in the Assembly and Councils, replacing futile rejection of the budget by a programme combining co-operation in carrying on essential services with persistent demands backed by consistent and substantial majorities for speedy extension and recasting of reforms and speeding up of Indianization including the Army? In view of such deliberate misrepresentation, prompted by a desire to discredit the Swarajists in particular and the Indian National movement in general and in view of the thick ignorance which prevails in England regarding the real aims of the movement, don't you think that an Indian Bureau should be established in England for the dissemination of the truth regarding India? Have you revised your views since Nagpur? If the expense of maintaining such a bureau will be too heavy, should not a small subsidy be paid from Congress funds to some individual who is willing to undertake the work?

A. I did see the cablegram, but I thought that nobody would attach the slightest importance to it or credit me with the views about co-operation such as are imputed to me in the

cable. As I have said so often, I am personally eager and anxious to offer co-operation, but I am more eager and more anxious to strengthen the forces of non-co-operation till there is the slightest possible indication of a change of heart, of which hitherto I have seen no sign whatsoever. I retain the same views about a publicity bureau to be maintained or subsidized in London for the purpose of contradicting mis-statements that may appear in the British Press. I am still of opinion that no misrepresentation or mis-statement can possibly do us any harm if we are ourselves strong and sound. Conversely, no patronizing or favourable notice of our demands in the British or the foreign Press can be of any avail to us if we are ourselves weak, disorganized and not prepared to give battle to the Government. Therefore, every rupee that we can spare I would utilize for the khaddar propaganda, for national schools and for other parts of the constructive programme.

Q. You must have seen that resort to so-called satyagraha is becoming frequent in the country not only in connection with political grievances but purely religious or social. Don't you think that there is danger of the abuse of this weapon and *duragraha* instead of satyagraha being practised for illegitimate ends? Can you lay down any rules for satyagrahis — at least those who follow the Congress lead?

Yes, I agree that there is some danger of satyagraha degenerating into an evil force and therefore becoming harmful. Abuse of a good thing is always possible, especially of a force so powerful and subtle as satyagraha. I think, in my discussion of satyagraha at Vykom, I have discussed in a cursory manner its fundamentals, but I accept your suggestion and, as soon as I have a little leisure, I hope to draw the rules which in my opinion are binding upon every satyagrahi.

In the course of a conversation with Messrs K. Madhavan Nair and Kurur Neelakantan Nambudripad, who constitute the Vykom Deputation, they gave me to understand that they had three to four long interviews with Mahatmaji and had discussed the question threadbare. They represented the whole case as well as they could, which Mahatmaji listened to with his characteristic patience and politeness. They said to me that they were satisfied with Mahatmaji's statement and were confident that it would satisfy workers and sympathizers in Kerala and the Madras Presidency. Mahatmaji emphasized self-reliance and self-sufficiency involved in a movement. They were afraid, they said, that Mahatmaji might find objection to the Congress Committee undertaking the [anti-]untouchability movement as it was represented in some quarters. They were, however, satisfied that there was nothing of the

kind. Mahatmaji's very emphatic assertion raises no apprehensions in that direction. The Deputation is returning to Vykom in a day or two.

With regard to the Council question, Mahatmaji gave our representative to understand that a full statement would be issued to the Press in the course of this week. Our representative understands that Mahatmaji and Swarajist leaders had had long and repeated conferences and the decision is practically arrived at.

The Hindu, 19-5-1924

38. *MY NOTES*

Shastras on Child-Marriage

A friend, commenting on the article on "Renunciation Personified"[1], has written to me to the following effect: "You are against the marriage of girls under fifteen, but the Shastras enjoin us to get girls married before they attain puberty. Even those who are against child-marriage follow this injunction of the Shastras. How does one solve this dilemma?" I see no dilemma here. Anyone who claims or believes that whatever is found in the books known as the Shastras is true and that no departure from it is permissible will find himself in such dilemmas at every step. A given verse may be interpreted in many ways, and these meanings may even be mutually contradictory. Moreover, the Shastras lay down some principles which are immutable, while some others related to conditions at a particular time and place and applied only to those circumstances. If anyone could live in the Arctic region where the sun does not set for six months, at what time should he perform *sandhya*[2]? What would he do about bathing, etc.? The *Manusmriti*[3] lays down many rules about what should and what should not be eaten, not one of which is observed today. Nor were all the verses written by the same person or at the same time. Hence, anyone who lives in fear of God and does not wish to violate moral laws has no choice but to reject everything which seems to be immoral. Self-indulgence cannot possibly be dharma. Hinduism places no restrictions on a life of self-control. What about the girl who has come to feel aversion to worldly pleasures? What does attaining puberty signify? Why should we insist that a girl should

[1] Vide Vol. XXIII, pp. 523-7.
[2] Worship, especially morning and evening
[3] Manu's code of laws

necessarily be married immediately after or before she arrives at a state which is normal for women? One can well understand a restriction to the effect that a girl can marry only after she has arrived at this state. Quarrelling over the meaning of the Shastras, we should never perpetrate cruelties. A Shastra is what leads us towards *moksha*[1] and dharma what teaches us self-restraint. Anyone who jumps into a well and drowns himself merely because it is his ancestral well is a misguided fool. Akha Bhagat[2] described the Shastras as a dark well. Jnaneshwar[3] regarded even the Vedas as much too narrow in scope. Narasinh Mehta[4] regarded experience alone as true knowledge. If we turn our eyes to the world, we can see that what this gentleman regards as dharma is in truth *adharma*[5] and should be completely rejected. It is because of this *adharma* that today we sacrifice innumerable young girls. History will condemn Hindu men for this custom. We need not, however, worry over what history will say. We ourselves are tasting the bitter fruit of the custom of child-marriage. It cannot be denied that this custom is one main reason why many Hindu young men have no spirit in them, behave like cripples and are all fear. It should not be forgotten that children of parents who are not fully grown men and women cannot develop a strong physique, do what you will. Fortunately, all Hindus do not follow the rule mentioned by the gentleman and the race has not totally lost its physical vitality. If, however, it were literally followed in practice, Hindu society would have no men at all.

A Legitimate Complaint

Perhaps most readers of *Navajivan* have not heard of Shri Harihar Sharma. He may be described as a relative of Kaka's. Let me introduce the reader to that family. When Barrister Shri Keshavrao Deshpande founded the Ganganath Vidyalaya in Baroda, he gathered round him a group of teachers and, with the idea of creating a family-feeling among them, gave them titles indicative of family relationships. The school as an institution housed in a particular building has ceased to exist, but as a sentiment it survives even today. This family circle still maintains its old ties. Like blood-relationship, spiritual relationship too cannot

[1] Deliverance from phenomenal existence as the supreme end of life
[2] Gujarati saint-poet of the 17th century
[3] Maharashtrian saint of the 13th century
[4] 1414-1479; saint-poet of Gujarat
[5] The opposite of dharma

cease. Inspired by this idea, those who were given these titles of family relationships regard them as sacred and have retained them. Keshavrao Deshpande's followers still know and respect him by the name of "Saheb". Our Kalelkar likes always to be addressed as "Kaka". Very few Gujaratis know Phadke by that name. We know him as "Mama". Similarly, Harihar Sharma is "Anna". This is one of the titles in use in Maharashtrian families. In Tamil, too, it is used in much the same sense. "Anna" means brother. Another person is known as "Bhai". Though he is still alive, he is as good as lost. I do not know the names of all the members of this well-known family. I have given these few facts while introducing Shri Harihar Sharma, hoping that Kaka himself will tell us in detail about the family when he has an occasion to do so.

Through this preface, I have also removed one misconception. Some persons, or rather quite a few, believe that Kaka and other workers like him are my gift to Gujarat; in fact, they are gifts by Saheb. He has given them on loan to me and, thereby, has put a responsibility on me as well. My only duty towards the members of this family is to help them in their work and increase their devotion to Saheb as much as possible. Other birds, too, have come for shelter into the nest which I have built. If we examine the reasons for this, we shall see that they have all come because people find comfort for their spirit in this nest. The birds feel their wings strengthened here, not clipped, so that they can fly as they wish. I am their debtor so long as they stay. As I am not responsible for collecting them, I cannot keep them either. Everyone is free to follow his own way. Since, however, they believe in self-restraint, I cannot describe them as men who accept no law.

This Anna has taken up the work of propagating Hindi in the Dravida region and, fnr that purpose, he and his wife studied Hindi in Prayag. Both of them passed the Hindi examination there and they started the work of spreading Hindi in Madras. Anyone who wants to get more information about this can do so by writing to him.

Shri Anna also brings out a fortnightly magazine called *Hindi Prachar*. The chairman of the Reception Committee of the Provincial Conference[1] at Borsad sent him an invitation which was wholly in English! How could Anna tolerate this? He has

[1] The Seventh Gujarat Political Conference held on May 13, 1924

written me a strongly-worded letter. It should have been addressed to Mohanlal Pandya[1]. He is the guilty party, and I get the slap. Anna knows Pandya. But, perhaps, he was afraid of writing to him. I being the meek cow, all ticks come and settle on me. That is what Anna has done. He says:[2]

It is not necessary for me to comment on this. There is only one way of satisfying Anna and it is that those Gujaratis who have not so far learnt Hindi-Urdu, that is Hindustani, should do so and, in future, use their mother tongue among themselves and with others generally, the national language.

Letter from Narasinhrao

I have reproduced the letter[3] as I have received it, in obedience to Shri Narasinhrao's wishes. I see that he has been pained by the manner in which I referred[4] to his name. I feel unhappy and beg his forgiveness for having given him offence, even unintentionally. I do not play with anyone's name; how, then, can I take such liberty with the names of such literary figures as Shri Narasinhraobhai and Shri Khabardar? What I wrote was inspired by my regard for both of them. If I could not express this regard, I wish to assure them that it was not because I did not feel it, but because I lacked power of expression.

Kalyanji's Condition

Having heard that Shri Kalyanji Vithalji[5] is not well and that he experiences some difficulty about diet, etc., I wrote and inquired of the Inspector-General of Prisons before writing anything on this subject in *Navajivan*. I give below a translation of his reply to me:[6]

Shri Kalyanji's weight cannot be regarded as satisfactory. If he weighed only 92 lb. before his imprisonment, this was much below normal. While in prison, he should put on weight so that it may be in proportion to his height.

[1] Mohanlal Kameshwar Pandya, a Congress worker of Kheda district in Gujarat who participated in several satyagraha campaigns since the Kheda satyagraha of 1918

[2] The letter is not translated here.

[3] The letter is not translated here.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 498.

[5] Congress leader and educationist of Gujarat

[6] Not reproduced here

"KIRTANS" ABOUT "ANTYAJAS"

A volunteer writes to say that there are *kirtans* on the subject of swadeshi, i.e., khadi, propaganda against drinks and so on, and that they have proved very useful for propaganda in the villages. There are no such *kirtans* about *Antyajas*. There are many poets in Gujarat—both among the non-co-operators and those who co-operate with the Government. Untouchability is a subject on which there is not much difference of opinion between the former and the latter. The difference between the two becomes relevant only when there is a question of asking for Government help for starting schools and providing other facilities for *Antyajas*. Will not, therefore, our Gujarati poets compose poems on the idea that untouchability is a sin and that it is the duty of every Hindu to help the *Antyajas* and thereby serve Gujarat?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

39. FAMILY QUARREL

An *Anavil*[1] gentleman, who has supplied his name and address, has this complaint to make:[2]

I can understand that the condition of many men must be as pitiable as this gentleman's. The relation between a man and his wife is so delicate that a stranger's intervention can do little good. Satyagraha signifies pure love. When love between husband and wife becomes wholly pure, it reaches its perfection. There is no place in it then for sensual pleasures nor for any touch of selfishness. That is why the poets have conceived and expressed the longing of the individual self for the Supreme Self in terms of conjugal love. Such pure love is rarely to be found anywhere. Desire for marriage springs from attachment, from intense attachment. When that attachment has developed into an unselfish bond and one has no desire for physical contact—does not even think of it—when one *atman*[3] completely merges itself in another, we

[1] A community in Gujarat

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had asked whether he should not start satyagraha against his wife, who would not give up wearing foreign clothes while attending marriages, cinemas, etc., though she had stopped buying foreign cloth.

[3] Self

then see that one gets a glimpse of the love of the Supreme *Atman*. This is a rather crude way of expressing the idea. The love I want the reader to conceive is completely free from desire. I have not become so free myself as to be able to describe it aright and I know, therefore, that I cannot command the language which can describe it. But a pure reader will be able to imagine for himself what that language ought to be. Since I believe in the possibility of such love between husband and wife, what can satyagraha not do? The satyagraha I mean is not what is nowadays known by that name. Parvati[1] resorted to satyagraha against Shankar by doing penance for thousands of years. Rama did not do what Bharata[2] wished and so the latter retired to Nandigram. Rama was in the right and so was Bharata. Either kept his pledge. Bharata took away Rama's wooden sandals and, worshipping them, attained to the perfection of yoga. Rama's *tapascharya*[3] did not exclude external happiness; Bharata's was unparalleled. For Rama it was possible to forget Bharata, but Bharata had Rama's name on his lips continually. God, therefore, made himself the servant of his servant.

This is an example of purest satyagraha. Truly speaking, neither won, or, if anyone can at all be said to have won, it was Bharata. Tulsidas said that, if Bharata had not been born, Rama's name would not have been invested with the holiness it possesses, and in that way presented to us the supreme truth of love.

If my correspondent would forget for a while the physical aspect of love and cultivate the spiritual feeling which lies behind the love of husband and wife—I know that it cannot be cultivated by conscious effort, that it reveals itself, if at all, spontaneously—I can say with confidence that his wife will burn her foreign clothes that very day. Let no one ask why I advise such a big effort for a trivial thing or say that I have no sense of proportion. Small events bring about changes in our life which deliberately planned occasions or so-called important events do not.

I can quote from my experience no end of examples of satyagraha between husband and wife, but they, too, I know, may be misused. I think the present atmosphere is poisonous. In view of this, I would not commit the sin of confusing the judgment of this correspondent, who has put to me a frank question, by citing my experiences. I have, therefore, merely explained the highest

[1] Consort of Shiva

[2] Step-brother of Rama; during the period of Rama's exile, Bharata did not enjoy kingly privileges, but ruled the kingdom in Rama's name.

[3] Self-suffering as moral discipline

state. I leave it to him to choose a suitable remedy conforming to it for meeting his difficulty.

The position of women is delicate. Whatever one does about them smacks of the use of force. Life in Hindu society is hard, and that is why it has remained comparatively pure. I think a husband has the right to exercise only such influence as he can through pure love. If one of them at any rate overcomes carnal desire altogether, the task will become easy. It is my firm opinion that mainly, if not wholly, the man himself is responsible for the defects which he sees in woman. It is he who teaches her love of finery, who decks her out in what is regarded as attractive apparel. Then the woman gets used to these things and, later, if she is not able to follow her husband the moment he chances to change his way of life, the fault lies with him, not with her. Hence the man will have to have patience.

If India is to win swaraj by peaceful means, women will have to contribute their full share in the effort. Swaraj will certainly stay far off as long as women hanker after foreign cloth or mill-made cloth or silk.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 18-5-1924

40. WHAT SHOULD KATHIAWAR DO?

Last week, I stated in detail my views about holding a political conference. I do not know whether the conference will take place and, if so, where. But this I know, that even some of the friends who came to see me were disappointed. They claim to be staunch satyagrahis. I should like to tell them that, in the dictionary of satyagrahis, there is no word or synonym for disappointment. I do not even understand why they were disappointed. In fact, they were of the same opinion as I. But we may grant that they were hypnotized by my presence. If so, when they were out of that presence, they could have pulled themselves up and thought again. If they felt then that the workers had committed no error and that, in case the Durbar[1] refused permission for holding the conference despite their agreeing to the conditions, it became a duty to offer satyagraha; all of them, or any one of them could offer it. It is the beauty of satyagraha that it can be offered even by a lone individual. I can well understand that

[1] The ruler of Bhavnagar which was then a princely State in Kathiawar

because of my opinion against the holding of the conference the public may feel confused. But anyone who is convinced that my view is right can remove this confusion by employing the tremendous power of satyagraha. A satyagrahi need not be discouraged even by opposition from me. I may be vain enough to believe that I alone know the science of satyagraha, but I certainly have no monopoly in understanding it. A friend has published a book on this subject, in which he has tried to prove that my satyagraha is relatively imperfect, while his is of the most perfect kind. I hope to acquaint the reader with this book some time or other. New discoveries will continue to be made about the uses of satyagraha and the methods of organizing it. Anyone who has confidence in himself ought to take the plunge and proceed with his plan. There is only one rule that cannot be violated, for it is part of the very definition of satyagraha. It is that a satyagrahi demonstrates his faith in what he regards as truth not by making others suffer, but by suffering himself. This being so, the satyagrahi alone will have to pay for his errors.

After these introductory remarks by way of encouragement to those who are real satyagrahis, I come to the last week's pledge.

The time has now come for the whole of the country and, especially for Kathiawar, to keep silent. The latter has always been accused of being brave in words and timid in deeds.[1] So far as the gift of the gab is concerned, the choice of the Goddess of Speech would certainly light on Kathiawaris. I often had this experience in South Africa also. The Kathiawaris there will testify to this. It need not be supposed that there were no exceptions to this, and that not even a few came forward to work, as I did. But God has especially blessed Kathiawar with public speakers.

It is, therefore, necessary that Kathiawaris keep mum now. Let them not lift their pens from the inkstands. If a conference is held, let it be not for the purpose of drawing up a schedule of speeches next year, but for chalking out a programme of work. We have discovered through experience that there is a great awakening among the people and that, when the occasion requires, we can get together thousands of people. This knowledge needed to be acquired. But it is no longer necessary to collect such vast numbers. To do so would only result in waste of time and money.

It is easy to work in Kathiawar with its population of twenty-six lakhs. Spreading the use of khadi, running schools and carrying on propaganda against liquor and opium—these are all urgent

[1] *Vide* also "Injustice to Kathiawaris", 1-6-1924.

tasks and work on them will yield quick results. Both the rulers and the subjects should feel ashamed if even a single person is forced by hunger to leave Kathiawar. What does Kathiawar lack? The land is fertile, the men and women are intelligent and able-bodied. It grows sufficient cotton. Weavers themselves have told me that many of them have to leave Kathiawar for want of employment. Two years ago they got work; one would expect them to get more now. Why do they get less, instead? Are not the workers in Kathiawar responsible for this falling off? If they stop making too many speeches and learn all the stages in the processing of cotton, they could improve the economic condition of Kathiawar in one year. They should see that foreign cloth and mill-made cloth are boycotted throughout Kathiawar. Mill-cloth transfers the wealth of the many into the hands of the few. When a person's blood accumulates in his brain, he is said to have an attack of tetanus. The victim has very little chance of surviving; if at all, an opening in the vein may help him. When the wealth of many is concentrated in the hands of one person, we can describe him as suffering from economic tetanus. Just as, in a healthy person, the blood circulates continuously through the arteries and veins and does not accumulate in any part of the body, each part receiving the amount it needs, similarly, in a healthy economy, wealth should circulate regularly through every part in amounts proportionate to the needs of each. The spinning-wheel is one powerful means by which such a healthy economic condition can be brought about. Owing to its disappearance, the wealth of the entire world is being drained away to Lancashire. This circumstance is the symptom of a deadly disease, which can be cured only by reinstating the spinning-wheel.

If the workers in Kathiawar have understood this simple yet wonder-working idea, they will learn every step in the processing of cotton and introduce this skill among the entire population. This is the first political task.

How many national schools are there in Kathiawar? How many illiterate girls and boys are there? Are there enough schools to meet their needs? If not, schools should be started for them and in these schools, along with instruction in letters, training in the use of the spinning-wheel can also be given. This is the second political task.

The third political task is cleansing ourselves of the filth of untouchability. Propaganda for the spinning-wheel can be easily carried on along with this work. I cannot say from this distance what need there is in Kathiawar for propaganda against liquor and

opium. Contact with the outside world cannot but have its effect. This is the fourth political task.

I have mentioned these tasks merely as illustrations. Local workers familiar with the conditions there can think of many other similar activities.

Some critics will cry out impatiently that this is social reform, not political work. But that is a misconception. By 'political' is meant that which deals with the ruler, with the State. A ruler means one who administers the affairs of society. Any person who does this must pay attention to all the matters I have mentioned. If he fails to do so, he is no administrator, no ruler; an organization in which these are ignored or given a subordinate place is not a political organization. The aim of a body like a political conference should be to help the ruler or, if he has strayed from the right path, to act as a check on him. Such assistance can be given or such control can be exercised only by those who have the same influence over the people as the ruler has. He alone from among the subjects can wield such influence on the people who serves them selflessly, and it is only through the activities outlined above that he can render such service. If, therefore, political conferences wish to do sound political work, engaging themselves in this service is the first step in their training and, as such, absolutely necessary.

This service, therefore, is the best training, and an essential one, for satyagraha. One who has not done such work has no right to offer satyagraha on behalf of the people. And the people, too, will not appreciate his effort. Without such service to our credit, we would be regarded as mere adventurers in the guise of workers or satyagrahis.

"But how long will it be before we can complete the work which remains to be done and when will the rulers mend their ways? Look at your Jam Saheb[1]. You used to say with pride that you came to know Jam Saheb when he was known as Ranjitsinhji, that you two were fellow-students and had occasionally met, and also that he had very simple ways at that time and bore great love for the people of the State. All this is gone now. Perhaps, the subjects of no other ruler are as oppressed as the Jam Saheb's. What relation is there between trying to bring about a change in his policy and inducing the people to take up spinning? We feel, rather, that you are tired of jail, do not wish to be imprisoned again, and so, to

[1] Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji (1872-1933), the ruler of Nawanagar, then a princely State in Kathiawar; educated in England where he won renown as a cricketer

shield your weakness, you want to lead us on to a wrong path and make us weak besides." This is not said by just one person. A friend spoke jokingly of my 'weakness'. I have made up this charge-sheet by putting together remarks by several persons.

I have heard much against the Jam Saheb. Two years ago, some friends had sent me documentary proof. However, as I was busy with some other work and reforming the administrations in Kathiawar was outside my sphere, I did nothing in the matter and wrote nothing on the subject. I do not wish even now to take up this problem. I believe that, if people succeed in the peaceful activities of the swaraj programme, the shortcomings, wherever they exist, in the administrations of the Indian States will come to be automatically remedied. If, however, I decide to interfere in any way in the affairs of Kathiawar States, I will not form my opinions on the basis of the story of only one side. Besides, my acquaintance with the Jam Saheb, such as it is, would make it obligatory for me to meet him first and put all the complaints before him. Only if, after this, I felt that injustice was being done and that the Jam Saheb was not inclined to stop it, would I raise the matter in public. I followed this method when dealing with the indigo planters in Champaran,[1] and I cannot possibly do less when dealing with rulers in Kathiawar. I would, therefore, request the Jam Saheb, if he happens to see this article, not to conclude from this discussion that I am making any allegations against the administration in his State. I have mentioned the matter merely by way of illustration. There is no doubt, of course, that his subjects have complained in the manner I have described.

Let us return to the subject. In my opinion, the service of the people which I have mentioned above has a close bearing on the problem of the alleged misrule by the Jam Saheb. Both the ruler and his subjects will listen to those who have rendered such service. A satyagrahi ought to be a strong person; he should not have a trace of cowardice in him. He should have, however, all the greater humility for his fearlessness. Without courtesy, fearlessness makes one proud and arrogant. A whole world separates satyagraha from pride. Even a very arrogant ruler will be obliged to give a patient hearing to one who is humble. Humility and courtesy cannot be cultivated except through service. A satyagrahi, again, should have experience of local conditions, and this, too, cannot be gained except through service. Criticizing the rulers is not experience. Many of the workers in Kathiawar are what are known as shrewd politi-

[1] In 1917; *vide* Vol. XIV.

cians. Political shrewdness has little connection with service. Politicians constitute the ruling class. I observed, when I was a child, that the people did not even provide a living for this class. If workers in Kathiawar wish to serve people, they should no longer regard themselves as politicians, but should become sweepers, farmers, weavers, potters, carpenters, and so on. To gain proficiency in such work, they may add their education and political experience. If truth and non-violence are also added, no government can match the strength arising from the combination of these three factors.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

41. *HOW MUCH A WEAVER CAN EARN*

A friend writes in his misery:[1]

It is necessary to reassure this correspondent and others who share his doubts. What I wrote was meant for intellectuals like lawyers. I do not wish to alter my statement despite this criticism. I know that many weavers in the Punjab earn more than two rupees a day. The highly-skilled weavers of Madanpura in Bombay easily earn three rupees a day. It is true, of course, that they use foreign yarn or mill-made yarn. If, shaking off their laziness, they were to agree to use hand-spun yarn as woof, their income would surely not grow less. Why cannot others earn as much as these weavers do? One explanation which may be offered is that these weavers have plenty of experience. That is indeed a fact, but it is not necessary to have years of experience for a family to earn two rupees a day. I believe that anyone who works on the loom eight hours a day for one year, excepting Sundays, will gain the necessary experience; in any case, it is certain that, if one acquires skill in weaving, it requires little time to work designs and the earnings rise by half as much again or even more. Weaving coloured borders by itself fetches more money. Many weavers get higher wages only by virtue of their skill. Moreover, the income which I have visualized is not for one person, but for a family.

Ordinarily, much more work is done when other members of the family also help. Let us suppose that a skilled weaver, his

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had questioned the accuracy of Gandhiji's statement that one could earn two to three rupees a day through weaving. He had asked Gandhiji to correct his statement, if it was not correct.

wife and his ten-year-old son are engaged in weaving. The weaver has a stock of cotton stored. He makes slivers and gives them for spinning to women in the neighbourhood. He weaves that same yarn and himself sells the cloth to consumers. Both man and wife are engaged in weaving and, between the two, they work twelve hours a day. The child spools the yarn and helps in other ways. A family working in this manner will, in most cases, easily earn two rupees a day. Where it does not, it will be found that the cost of living too is relatively low. My correspondent is afraid that some inexperienced person may be misled by my article and take up weaving. I hope that some skilled weaver will choose a place and make the experiment I have suggested. It is possible that his experience may not bear me out. In any case he will lose nothing. I do not invite persons who earn one or two hundred rupees a month to make this experiment, but I certainly wish to tempt those who are unemployed or those who are working as clerks in an uncongenial atmosphere and on a salary of thirty rupees. The only condition is that the worker should have a fairly strong physique. He should not be averse to work and should be always ready to work for eight hours. If he has a family, so much the better. If, however, he is single, but is a good weaver, he will certainly earn thirty rupees a month. Suppose, however, that it takes him some time to reach that figure; even then, what does it matter? He may be sure that he will not feel as if caught in a hole.

I shall be obliged if those who have had some experience in this matter write to me, even though it goes against my estimate. I may even use it in *Navajivan* when occasion arises.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

42. SOME DIFFICULTIES

A volunteer has written a most serious letter in which he has discussed many issues. I quote from it those paragraphs on which I think I can express my views now.[1]

Fortunately for me, I do not regard anyone as my follower and so I shall not share in anyone's sins. But this is not enough to allay the fears of the correspondent or to absolve me from responsibility. I have been receiving complaints from all quarters against my so-called followers. I am looking for a way out of this situation.

[1] Not translated here

With my faith in God as the Friend of those who suffer, I trust that He will show me the way to put an end to the activities of these so-called followers. Fraud cannot prosper for ever. Some men may be deceived for some time, but history has no example of all men having been deceived for all time.

It is also true that the working of the Congress constitution has become loose. There is much truth in the view that even a perfect constitution falls into discredit when worked by the wrong type of people and that the right type can make good use of even an imperfect constitution. It is obvious that volunteers should not receive four annas[1] from anyone without first explaining to him what it is for. It is also obvious that, having obtained the amount, they should not forget the persons who paid. The very idea behind establishing village [Congress] committees was to maintain constant contact between the villagers and the Congress.

No one who, like this correspondent, has seen the poverty of the villages will think of anything except the spinning-wheel as the means of ending it, for there is no such means. That is why the progress we make in popularizing the spinning-wheel will be our progress towards swaraj. The idea that one should not accept remuneration from the Congress is a kind of pride. It is not possible to get a large number of honorary workers and, therefore, swaraj work cannot go on if no one offers to join as a paid worker. It is a false notion that people do not look with respect upon those who accept a salary. Of course they will have no respect for people who do not work tirelessly in their service, regardless of whether or not the persons concerned receive a salary. I have sufficient experience to know that the people will not mind paying anyone who does indeed work thus tirelessly. It is true that the Congress cannot give large salaries, but I have no doubt that it can afford some small payment to workers. We should look upon it as an honour to accept remuneration from the Congress and serve the nation rather than accept a paid job elsewhere. What fascination do people find in the Civil Service! Why is this so? One should feel even greater attraction for service in the Congress. If a person who enters the Civil Service may rise to a high post, one who serves the Congress may become its President. But anyone who is tempted simply by this prospect to take up service in it will also sink to a low level. Gokhale served the Fergusson College for twenty years. Although he had some income from the Royal Commission and such other sources, he continued to accept a salary from the College and

[1] This was the fee for ordinary membership of the Congress.

regarded it as an honour to do so. Readers will remember that the salary started at Rs. 40 and did not exceed Rs. 75. Congress will not have its work done well so long as it does not get paid workers who will be indefatigable in its service. We shall not get many workers till people feel that it is an honour to work and receive payment. The best way to raise paid work in people's esteem is for Vallabhbhai himself to accept a salary. When I start serving, I will certainly enrol myself as a paid worker.

What the salary should be and how it should be fixed, whether everyone should be paid the same salary and whether the candidates would have to sit for a test are problems that do arise, but solving them is the test of our capacity to run an organization.

I shall not comment on the criticism against the Press, since I have little knowledge about Gujarati papers. This great activity started while I was in jail.[1] There is no doubt, however, that it is the duty of newspapers to educate the people to turn their attention to action; it is no longer necessary to rouse them. The people know now that the present system of government needs to be changed, that swaraj has to be secured, and they also know the means to be employed for the purpose. Only, we have not yet gathered speed in our progress in this direction. Newspapers should concentrate on imparting that. There can be no two opinions on this matter.

Of course, it is our duty to teach our *Antyaja* brethren to keep themselves clean. If we mix with them, we shall, in our own interest, teach them to be clean. We should be patient, knowing that their uncleanliness is the result of our sin. Till now, we have not treated *Antyajas* as our brothers, not even as human beings. We should not be surprised if we have to suffer the consequences of our own misdeeds. Even so, we should certainly help them to rid themselves of their vices. They are by nature straightforward people. They know that they have to bring about these reforms. If they get the help they need, I believe they will surpass us.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-5-1924

[1] At Yeravda in 1922-24

43. SPEECH AT BUDDHA JAYANTI MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

BOMBAY,
May 18, 1924

The only reason for inviting me to preside at this meeting is, I presume, that I am more than most people endeavouring to popularize the truth for which Gautama Buddha lived and died. For, my book-knowledge of Buddhism, I am sorry to have to confess, is of the poorest type. It is confined to the fascinating book of Sir Edwin Arnold, which I read for the first time now nearly thirty-five years ago, and one or two books during my brief incarceration in the Yeravda Jail. But that great Buddhist scholar, Professor Kausambi, tells me that *The Light of Asia* gives but a faint idea of Buddha's life, and that at least one incident in the beautiful poem is not to be found in any authoritative original Buddhist work. Perhaps some day the learned Professor will give us the results of his ripe scholarship in the shape of a reliable story of Buddha's life for the ordinary Indian reader.

For the moment, however, I would like to tell the meeting what I believe about Buddhism. To me it is a part of Hinduism. Buddha did not give the world a new religion; he gave it a new interpretation. He taught Hinduism not to take but to give life. True sacrifice was not of others but of self. Hinduism resents any attack upon the Vedas. It regarded the new interpretation as such attack. Whilst, therefore, it accepted the central truth of Buddha's teaching, it fought against Buddhism regarded as a new and anti-Vedic cult.

It has become the fashion nowadays in some quarters to say that India's downfall dates from her acceptance of Buddha's teachings. It is tantamount to saying that love and piety, if sufficiently practised, will degrade the world. In other words, according to the critics, evil should triumph in the end. It is my unalterable belief that India has fallen not because it accepted Gautama's teaching, but because it failed to live up to it. The priest has ever sacrificed the prophet. Vedas to be divine must be a living word, ever

[1] Presiding over the Buddha Jayanti celebrations under the auspices of the Buddha Society of Bombay, Gandhiji spoke on the "Ideals and Teachings of Buddha". This was his first public appearance after release. Gandhiji spoke from a prepared text, the draft of which is available. Newspapers carried a report with slight verbal variations.

growing, ever expanding and ever responding to new forces. The priest clung to the letter and missed the spirit.

But we need not despair. The reformation that Buddha attempted has not yet had a fair trial. Twenty-five hundred years are nothing in the life of the world. If the evolution of form takes aeons, why should we expect wonders in the evolution of thought and conduct? And yet the age of miracles is not gone. As with individuals, so with nations. I hold it to be perfectly possible for masses to be suddenly converted and uplifted. Suddenness is only seeming. No one can say how far the leaven has been working. The most potent forces are unseen, even unfelt, for long. But they are working none the less surely. Religion to me is a living faith in the Supreme Unseen Force. That Force has confounded mankind before, and it is bound to confound us again. Buddha taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love. This was his matchless gift to Hinduism and to the world.

He taught us also how to do it, because he lived what he taught. The best propaganda is not pamphleteering, but for each one of us to try to live the life we would have the world to live.

From a photostat of the draft: S.N. 8813; also C.W. 5176

44. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[*May 19, 1924*][1]

You have not written the letter as a Mr. Hyde, but as Shekhchalli.[2] Dr. Jekyll too has the right to build castles in the air; particularly when he happens to live in the Ashram castle. What is wrong is the desire to live away from me. Whatever that may be, I am not a stupid bania to sell my precious wares cheap by getting you a lucrative post and taking money from you for the Ashram. That much money you can get for the Ashram even by begging. I want to conduct the Ashram either by begging or by doing manual labour. There are many more things I would like to say, but you may spell them out from what I have said already. The body of a self-controlled man must be healthy. There is a contradiction

[1] The postmark bears this date.

[2] A day-dreamer

between physical education and spiritual education. There is a direct relation between health and spiritual strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MAHADEV DESAI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI[1]

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8785

45. TELEGRAM TO BACKERGUNGE DISTRICT CONFERENCE[2]

[*May 20, 1924*]

SORRY TOO LATE. YOUR MESSAGE RECEIVED ONLY TODAY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8816

46. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Vaisakha Krishna 2 [*May 20, 1924*][3]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have been getting your letters. Do keep writing to me. If I do not reply every time, you may take it that I haven't the time to do so.

Arrogance and firmness are generally found together. The former will gradually take a secondary place, if we go on promoting the *sattvik*[4] tendencies in us. The best way of overcoming arrogance is to try and refrain from reacting to opposition.

[1] The letter was redirected c/o Dr. Champaklal Ghiya, Haripura, Surat.

[2] This was in reply to a telegram from the Secretary, Backergunge District Conference, received on May 20, 1924, stating: "Backergunge district conference Pirojpor 24th May. Deshbandhu Maulana Azad attendance widely announced with their consent pray send both immediately failing false position."

On the top of the telegram Gandhiji had scribbled: "Inquire when was it received?"

[3] From the reference to the apology, the letter appears to have been written after the previous one to the addressee dated May 13. In 1924, *Vaisakha Krishna* 2 fell on May 20.

[4] Virtuous

Mr. Das[1] is already here and having talks with me. He is emphatically denying that he has acted improperly.

For the attacks that are taking place on Hindu women, I think we alone are to blame. The Hindus have become so cowardly that they cannot even protect their sisters. I am going to write a good deal on this subject. I do not see any easy remedy for this. There may be some exaggeration in the reports you have heard. After making allowance for that, what remains is enough to put us to shame.

I asked the manager to send you *Y.I.* and *Hindi N.J.* I hope you have got them by now.

You must have got the letter I wrote to you last week.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Even if your brother tenders an apology, you had better not apologize, if you can remain firm. We may not find fault with one who apologizes. One's morality is limited to one's strength.

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6007. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

47. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Vaisakha Vad 2 [May 20, 1924][2]

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. If any persons come for the Parishad[3], they will certainly stay with you. But isn't it quite far off yet?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6008. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925); eminent lawyer, Congress leader, orator and author; President of the Indian National Congress in 1922, at Gaya; leader of the Swarajist Party

[2] The postmark bears this date.

[3] Presumably, the Kathiawar Political Conference which was to be held in January 1925

48. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL AND DURGA DESAI

[*May 20, 1924*][1]

CHI. MANI,

I got your letter and postcard. I was very pleased to read what you say about "Tyagamurti"[2]. Purity and restraint are virtues to be treasured. We shall discusss them when we meet. You should now by God's grace get rid of the vestiges of the fever still troubling you. Vasumatibehn is going to Deolali and not to Hajira. You must give up all idea of leaving Hajira soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. DURGA,

After all you have not written to me. How do you do there?

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne

49. LETTER TO ADA WEST

May 20, 1924

MY DEAR DEVI[3],

I have just got your welcome letter. I am slowly gaining strength. I am at a sea-side place. Hope to go to the Ashram next week. How long are you staying there? How are you keeping? I must not write more. But I am asking Ramdas to give you all the news.

My love to you all.

Your brother,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS ADA WEST
23, GEORGE STREET
SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

From a photostat: G.N. 7618; also C.W. 4433. Courtesy: A. H. West

[1] As in the source

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 523-7.

[3] Sister of A. H. West, an associate of Gandhiji in South Africa. She had assumed the Indian name 'Devi'.

50. *INTERVIEW TO VAIKOM DEPUTATION*[1]

[*May 20, 1924*]

Q. Mahatmaji, you have stated that fasting as a weapon cannot be resorted to by a satyagrahi except against friends. The Travancore Government is either a friend or a foe that opposes the wishes of its subjects. If it is a friend, the sufferings undergone by the satyagrahis evidencing the intensity of their feelings in this matter are sure ultimately to melt the heart of the Government and induce it to grant the demands of the satyagrahis. The Maharaja of Travancore, though orthodox to the core, is a kind ruler and loves his subjects and he will not be able to look with equanimity on the sufferings undergone by the satyagrahis. He is not a tyrant who does not feel for his people. Under these circumstances, why cannot the satyagrahis adopt fasting to melt the Maharaja's heart and to conquer him through their sufferings?

A. Satyagraha implies absolute love and non-violence. Fasting as a weapon can only be used against a lover, a friend, a follower or co-worker who, on account of his love for you and the sufferings you undergo actually, realizes his mistake and corrects himself. He purifies himself of an evil which he knows and acknowledges to be an evil. You recall him from his evil ways to the correct path. A son can fast against a father addicted to drink to cure him of his evil. The father knows it to be an evil and realizes the enormity of it by the sufferings of the son and he corrects himself. My followers and co-workers who resorted to violence in Bombay knew that violence was against the principle of non-co-operation. Only they deviated from that fundamental principle. My fasting brought home to them their mistake and they corrected it.

But you cannot fast even against a friend when other considerations than actual realization of his evil ways are likely to make him yield. For example, when I proposed to introduce an untouchable as a member of my household, my wife objected.[2] My fasting against her under such circumstances might have obliged her to give in, but it would be the fear that my fasting would lead to my death and the loss of her husband that would influence

[1] This consisted of K. Madhavan Nair and Kurur Nilakantan Nambudripad.

[2] *Vide An Autobiography*, Pt. IV, Ch. X.

her to surrender her opinion and not the consciousness that she was committing a wrong in regarding a human being as untouchable. I succeeded in the case not by converting her to my opinion but by tyrannizing over her and doing violence to her feelings. In the same way, the Maharaja of Travancore may be a kind man who may not bear to witness with equanimity the death of a satyagrahi. Your fasting may compel him to yield, but he yields not because he sees the error of his ways and believes untouchability to be evil, but because he cannot bear to see the death of a person who, in his opinion, perversely chooses to die. This is the worst form of compulsion which militates against the fundamental principles of satyagraha.

Q. Supposing the Maharaja is not a friend, but a foe and a tyrant, it is impossible to win him over by the sufferings of the satyagrahis. In such a case, will it not be right to force the hands of the Government by the creation of a strong public opinion and by putting the Government in a false position? This implies the use of pressure. To quote an example in Kaira,[1] the Government that opposed the people was not conquered by love but by pressure. A sustained fight is necessary to bring about this pressure to bear fruit and a weak people cannot hope to put up such a sustained fight against an organized Government with immense resources without outside help. If satyagraha excludes even this pressure, you may call the fight at Vaikom by any other name—say, passive resistance, civil disobedience or non-violent assertion. In such a case, what objection is there in receiving outside help? By preventing us from adopting fasting or accepting outside help, don't you deprive us of the method available to us in a fight both against friend and against foe?

A. I do not admit that in Kaira or Borsad it was the pressure of public opinion that made the Government yield. Moreover, no outward pressure was brought to bear on the Government. I refused all outside help (in the case of Kaira), though many offered to pay me money. The intensity of the feeling manifested by the preparedness of the people to undergo any amount of suffering opened the eyes of the Government and they yielded. It was conviction that made the Government concede the demands of the people of Kaira. Such conviction can come only by the purity and strength of your sacrifice. Outside help weakens the strength of your sacrifice. The opponent sees no sacrifice in you and his heart is not touched and as a result his eyes are not opened. The volunteers, fed and financed with outside help, appear to the opponent

[1] The reference is to the Kheda Satyagraha, *vide* Vol. XIV.

more as mercenaries than like satyagrahis who are prepared to sacrifice their all for their principles. Such a fight is the trial of material and not spiritual strength. It is not true satyagraha. Almost the same question was raised at Chirala-Perala. I strongly advised Mr. Gopalakrishnayya to continue the fight unaided and the fight was carried on successfully. Non-violent assertion of your rights with outside help may be passive resistance but no satyagraha.

There is a world of difference between passive resistance and satyagraha. The passive resister does not and need not love his opponent, while a satyagrahi ought to. Passive resistance is a weak weapon adopted by a weak people, while satyagraha is a strong weapon wielded by a weak people. Passive resistance can be resorted to by the suppressed classes of Kerala, but I will not advise anyone to resort to it, nor do I wish that any Congress worker should countenance it. The ideal satyagraha is the satyagraha offered by the individual or individuals who suffer wrong without any help from outside. In the case of Vaikom, the ideal satyagraha is the satyagraha offered by the non-caste Hindus of Vaikom and their caste-Hindu sympathizers alone. If that is impossible they may descend from the ideal a little and receive help from people of such area that can visualize the situation and feel with them.

Q. Is not the removal of untouchability and unapproachability an all-India question, and Vaikom being the first pitched battle in the war against these two evils, will not a defeat there speak a disaster to the movement in general, and if it will, is it not the duty of all Indians to help in the fight? What is the significance of the word, 'local' as applied to Vaikom? If help from outside is pressure and overawing repugnant to the principles of satyagraha, can Vaikom non-caste Hindus seek aid in the form of money or volunteers from any place outside Vaikom? Can even Travancorians belonging to places other than Vaikom participate in the struggle? If they can seek and receive such help from people of Travancore and even from the people of the Madras Presidency, why can't they receive help from Hindus throughout India? Why should satyagrahis refuse help from the Hindu Sabha and similar bodies?

A. The question is partly answered in the answer given before. In the sense that the prohibition of the use of every well, tank, roads, etc., in every part of the country is the result of a common evil affecting the Hindus, the Vaikom struggle may also be regarded as an all-India question, but every such matter arising locally must be fought out locally and it is neither desirable nor

practicable that the whole[of] India or the central organization should fight out such questions. It will lead to chaos and confusion. The consequence can better be understood if there are a number of such fights going on at the same time. The central organization will be considerably weakened by the frittering of its energies in such a way. The local area will not develop the necessary strength to tackle such questions unaided. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency of each local area will make the whole of India strong and enable it to undertake the great fight that is in store. The solution of the problems at Vaikom will not solve the question of untouchability for the whole of India. India may share the victory it gains, but will not be responsible for the defeat it sustains.

Q. We do not understand your injunction against the participation of non-Hindus in the Vaikom struggle. You called upon the Hindus to help the Muslims in the matter of the Khilafat, a purely religious question. Hindus and Muslims, forming component parts of the Indian nation, it was then considered the duty of the Hindus to help the Muslims and thereby facilitate the early attainment of swaraj. The removal of untouchability being necessary for solidifying Indians into a nation, is it not the duty of every Indian, Hindu or non-Hindu, to have the evil removed?

A. In the case of the Khilafat, the fight was between the Muslim community and a non-Muslim power. If, on the other hand, it was a fight between two sections of the Moslem community, I would not have asked the Hindus to participate in the fight. It is the duty of the Hindus to free the society of the evil rampant in it. They cannot and ought not to call in the aid of outsiders in the reform work it carries on. It demoralizes you and unnecessarily offends the orthodox section whom you have to convert and conquer through your love and who will surely and legitimately feel insulted by such non-Hindu interference.

Q. In view of the fact that the struggle at Vaikom is directed to the establishment of a civic right, that is, the right of way along public roads, is it not the duty of every citizen irrespective of religion to assist in the struggle?

A. The Congress Committee has no business to interfere in the internal administration of a Native State. The Kerala Congress Committee has launched the campaign only because the Congress has called upon the Hindus to remove untouchability rampant in the Hindu society. The fight at Vaikom hinges on the disability of a certain class of people to use a road because they are unapproachable. This is a purely Hindu question and, therefore, the non-Hindus have no place in the struggle.

Q. Why is it, Mahatmaji, you are so strongly against the free kitchen opened by the Akalis? The Akalis are prepared to feed and are actually feeding all classes of people to whatever community or faction they may belong. They do not take sides in the fight.

A. No man of self-respect will partake of food from such a kitchen. You are not starving for want of food and you have not been reduced to the stage of depending on charity for your livelihood. The arguments already advanced against outside help apply equally to this free kitchen at Vaikom.

Q. What is the advice that you have to give us, Mahatmaji, with regard to the method of the fight in future?

A. You may continue in the same way you are doing. You may increase the number of volunteers that offer satyagraha. If you are strong enough, you can choose[1] other places where the suppressed classes labour under the same disability and offer satyagraha in those places. But, as a demonstration of the feelings of caste Hindus in the matter, you will do well to arrange an absolutely peaceful and non-violent procession from Vaikom to Trivandrum and back consisting of caste Hindus alone to meet the Maharaja and represent to him the necessity for the removal of the disability of the non-caste Hindus. The caste Hindus comprising the procession must be prepared to suffer the inconveniences incidental to a slow march on foot. They must camp in places away from villages and towns and make their own arrangements for food. The procession can be arranged only if the organizers are thoroughly satisfied of a non-violent atmosphere. The satyagraha at Vaikom may be suspended during the time that this procession is on the march. This is all the suggestion that I have to make at present.

The above is only a meagre summary of our discussions with Mahatmaji. Mahatmaji had a convincing answer ready to every question we put to him. The above summary may be treated as supplementing the statement Mahatmaji issued to the Press. He is very positive that the Kerala Congress Committee should continue the fight. Though he is, on principle, not in favour of outside help in a satyagraha campaign, he is clearly of opinion that Kerala is entitled to claim help even from outside Madras Presidency for general propaganda in connection with the untouchability campaign. Mahatmaji has further expressed the opinion that orders under Section 144 need not be disobeyed now because the number of workers is limited and the resources of the Committee have to be conserved as much as possible.

The Hindu, 26-5-1924

[1] The source has 'offer'.

51. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

Early Morning, Wednesday, May 21, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE[1],

Why do you say the Bhil boys should not wear the khaddar caps and shirts? What should they wear? Is not your analogy false? The missionary dressing like the collector and sitting with him identified himself with the authority that is evil. If the khaddar cap may be regarded as an emblem of purity, why may it not be worn by all? Such identification will be good surely. But I want the wicked as well as the good to wear khaddar as all must clothe themselves. Therefore I am trying to prevent khaddar from being associated with anything either good or evil. The shape in which it is worn is of no moment.

You expect not a line in reply to your letters. But when you put posers that need action, what is one to do?

With deepest love,

MOHAN

6, DWARKA NATH TAGORE LANE

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2611

52. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES-VI

ETHICS OF FASTING

When the incidents related in the last chapter took place, my cell was situated in a triangular block containing eleven cells. They were also part of the separate division, but the block was separated from the other separate blocks by a high massive wall. The base of the triangle lay alongside the road leading to the other separate blocks. Hence, I was able to watch and see the prisoners that passed to and fro. In fact, there was constant traffic along the road. Communication with the prisoners was therefore easy. Some time after the flogging incident, we were removed to the European yard. The cells were better ventilated and more roomy. There was a pleasant garden in front. But we were more secluded and cut off from all contact with the prisoners whom we used to see whilst we

[1] Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); English missionary, author, educationist and a close associate of Gandhiji

were in the 'separate'. I did not mind it. On the contrary, the greater seclusion gave me more time for contemplation and study. And the 'wireless' remained intact. It was impossible to prevent it so long as it was necessary for a single other prisoner or official to see us. In spite of effort to the contrary, someone of them would drop a remark resulting in our knowing the happenings in the jail. So one fine morning we heard that several Mulshi Peta prisoners were flogged for short task and that, as a protest against the punishment, many other Mulshi Peta prisoners had commenced a hunger-strike. Two of these were well known to me. One was Dev, and the other Dastane. Mr. Dev had worked with me in Champaran, and had proved one of the most conscientious, sober and honest among the co-workers whom I had the privilege of having in Champaran. Mr. Dastane of Bhusaval is known to everybody. The reader may therefore imagine my pain when I heard that Dev was among the party flogged and that he was also one of the hunger-strikers. Messrs Indulal Yagnik[1] and Manzar Ali Sokta were at this time my fellow-prisoners. They were agitated equally with me. Their first thought was to declare a sympathetic hunger-strike. We discussed the propriety of such a strike and came to the conclusion that it would be wrong to do so. We were neither morally nor in any other way responsible for the floggings or the subsequent hunger-strike. As satyagrahis we were to be prepared for and to suffer cheerfully the rigours of jail life and even injustices including flogging. Such hunger-strike, therefore, with a view to preventing future punishment would be a species of violence done to the jail officials. Moreover, we had no right to sit in judgment upon the action of the authorities. That would be an end to all prison discipline. And even if we wished to judge the authorities, we had not and could not get sufficient data to warrant an impartial judgment. If the fast was to be out of sympathy with the hunger-strikers, we had no data to enable us to judge whether their action was justified or not. Any one of these grounds was sufficient to show that the proposed fast would be wholly premature. But I suggested to my friends that I should try to find out the true facts through the Superintendent, and endeavour as before to get into touch with the hunger-strikers. I felt that we as human beings could not possibly remain uninterested in such matters although we were prisoners, and that under certain circumstances even a prisoner was entitled to claim a hearing in the matter of general jail

[1] Then secretary, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee; since 1957, Member of Parliament

administration when it was likely to result in the perpetration of gross injustice bordering on inhumanity. So we all decided that I should approach the authorities in the matter. The letter of 29th June, 1923[1], published in *Young India* of March 6, 1924, will give the reader further details about the matter. There was a great deal of correspondence and negotiation which, being of a confidential nature, I do not wish to publish. I can however say that the Government recognized that I had no desire to interfere with the prison administration and that my proposal to be permitted to see the two leaders among the hunger-strikers was dictated by purely humanitarian motives. They, therefore, permitted me to see Messrs Dastane and Dev in the presence of the Superintendent and Mr. Griffiths, the Inspector-General of Police. It was to me a rare pleasure and a matter of pride to see these two friends walking unaided and with a steady step after full thirteen days' unbroken fast. They were as cheerful as they were brave. I could see that they were terribly reduced in body, but their spirit had waxed strong in exact proportion to the reduction of the body. As I hugged them and greeted them with the question, "Are you nearly dead?" they rang out, "Certainly not," and Dastane added, "We are able to prolong the fast indefinitely, if need be, for we are in the right." "But if you are in the wrong?" I asked. "We shall then like men admit our mistake and abandon the fast," was the reply. By their brightness they made me forget that they were suffering from pangs of hunger. I wish I had leisure to reproduce the whole of the ethical discourse we held. Their ground for fasting was that the punishment inflicted by the Superintendent was unjust and that, therefore, unless the Superintendent admitted his mistake and apologized, they must go on with the fast. I pleaded that this was not a correct attitude. Whilst I was discussing the moral basis of their action, the Superintendent voluntarily and out of his usual good nature intervened and said, "I tell you, if I felt that I had done wrong, I should surely apologize. I know that I do make mistakes. We all do. I may have erred even in this case, but I am not conscious of it." I continued my pleading. I told my friends that it was improper to expect an apology from the Superintendent unless he could be convinced that he was wrong. Their fast could carry no conviction to him of the wrongness of the punishment. Such conviction could be brought about only by reasoning. And, in any case, as satyagrahis who were out for suffering, how could they fast against injustices whether done to

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 167-8.

them or their co-prisoners? My friends appreciated the force of my argument and Major Jones's generous statement did the rest. They agreed to break the fast and to persuade the others to do likewise. I asked for the Major's permission to give them a portion of my milk which he readily granted. They accepted the milk but said they would first take their bath and then take the milk in the company of the other hunger-strikers. The Major ordered milk and fruit diet for the strikers during the period of recuperation. A hearty handshake between us all terminated the meeting. For the moment the officials were not officials and we were not prisoners. We were all friends engaged in solving a knotty problem and glad that it was solved. Thus ended this eventful hunger-strike. The Major admitted that this was the cleanest hunger-strike he had witnessed. He had taken extraordinary precautions to see that no food was passed to the prisoners surreptitiously and he was satisfied that none was passed. Had he known the stuff of which these strikers were made, he need not have taken any precautions at all.

One permanent result of the incident was that the Government passed orders that, except in cases of the gravest provocation and insult offered to the officials, flogging should not be administered without the previous sanction of the superior authority. The precaution was undoubtedly necessary. Whilst, in some matters, widest discretion must be given to the Superintendents of Jails, in matters such as punishments which cannot be recalled, the wisest of Superintendents must be subject to salutary checks.

There can be no doubt that the hunger-strike of Messrs Dastane and Dev and the other satyagrahis produced startling results of a beneficial character. For the motive, though mistaken, was excellent and the action itself purely innocent. But though the result attained was good, the fast must be condemned. The good result was not a direct result of the fast but of repentance and admission of mistaken motive and consequent abandonment of the fast. Fasting by a satyagrahi can only be justified when it is a shame to eat and live. Thus, still confining my attention to a prisoner's conduct, it would be a shame to eat and live if I was deprived of religious liberty or degraded as a human being, as when food is thrown at me instead of being given to me in a courteous manner. It should be unnecessary to say that religious objection should be really so and discourtesy should be such as would be felt by an ordinary prisoner. The caution is necessary because a religious necessity is often pretended merely in order to embarrass, and discourtesy is often felt where none is meant. I

may not insist on keeping or bringing the *Bhagavad Gita* for the purpose of stealing in prohibited correspondence. I may not resent as discourtesy the ordinary search which every prisoner must undergo. In satyagraha there is no room for shams. But I would have been bound to fast, say, if the Government had not given me the opportunity of seeing the hunger-strikers merely with a view to understand their view-point and dissuade them from their error, if I found them to be erring. I could not afford to eat to live, when I knew that it was possible to prevent starvation if my keepers recognized the ordinary rules of humanity.

"But," say some friends, "why should you draw these fine distinctions? Why should we not embarrass the jail officials as we embarrass officials outside? Why should we co-operate as you co-operated with the jail authorities? Why should we not non-violently resist them? Why should we obey any regulations at all, save for our own convenience? Have we not a perfect right, is it not our duty, to paralyse the prison administration? If we make the officials' position uncomfortable without using any violence, the Government will find it difficult to arrest a large number and will thus be obliged to sue for peace." This argument has been seriously advanced. I must therefore devote the next chapter to its consideration.

Young India, 22-5-1924

53. BOYCOTT FOREIGN CLOTH

Last week I endeavoured to show the futility of the boycott of Empire goods campaign. I submit that it is even harmful in that it distracts the country's attention from the only effective and indispensable boycott. I have admitted more than once that, if we eliminate non-violence from our consideration, those who do not believe with me that non-violence in politics is the only remedy for achieving our goal and are satisfied that non-violent methods have failed, are not only justified in applying other remedies if they find them more effective, but are bound to do so. My point, however, is that boycott of Empire goods is not at all feasible so long as the present system is in existence. So far as I can see, the only alternative to non-violence and all it implies is an armed rebellion. If we wish to make preparations for it, boycott of Empire goods has not only a legitimate but it has a necessary place in the national programme. Its retention and a fierce propaganda in its favour must increasingly heat our blood as we realize our impotence. The natural consequence of such propaganda must there-

fore result in [*sic*] undisciplined violence all round. It would not then matter that it is crushed. It will still be considered a training in armed rebellion. Each crushing will certainly bring demoralization among many but will bring increased determination among a few. And out of that small determined band may arise an army of soldiers such as William the Silent[1] surrounded himself with. If the national workers have come to the conclusion that India cannot write new history, but must do as the European countries have done, I would understand and appreciate their campaign of boycott of Empire goods. Even though it may never succeed, it must be kept up as an ideal, because it would be regarded as one of the factories for generating the necessary steam. India has a right to adopt the time-worn method if she chooses to, and no power on earth can deprive her of that right.

But I venture to say, with confidence, that the way of the sword is not open to India. I dare to prophesy that if India chooses that way, she must be prepared:

(1) either to submit to foreign rule for generations to come;

(2) or to submit to exclusively Hindu or exclusively Mussalman rule almost in perpetuity.

I know that there are Hindus who, if they cannot have a purely Hindu India, are prepared to make the best terms with the Englishmen, and I know, too, that there are Mussalmans who, till they are able to impose a purely Mussalman rule on India, are prepared to resign themselves to the English domination. To this minority I have no argument to address. They must continue to plough the sands. But I know that there is a very large majority that is impatient of foreign domination and is anxious to find an effective method of ridding India of it. I do not despair of convincing them that swaraj in which Hindus, Mussalmans and all others professing different creeds can participate on equal terms is attainable in a much shorter time than they can imagine possible if the thinking portion adopts means that are strictly non-violent, and of further convincing them that attainment of such swaraj is impossible through any other means.

For the time being, however, I propose to assume that the Congress creed being what it is, Congressmen are precluded from creating an atmosphere predisposed to violence. Ineffective boycott of Empire goods must create such an atmosphere and, therefore,

[1] William I (1533-84); founder of the Dutch Republic; opposed Philip II in his persecution of Protestants and led a "War of Liberation" against Spanish armies and succeeded in gaining independence for a number of provinces of Holland.

I go so far as to say that the boycott resolution was *ultra vires* of the Congress creed. But this point can only be decided by the Congress.

Let me, therefore, confine the reader's attention to the alternative boycott of foreign cloth. I suggest to the Liberals, Nationalists and Congressmen that, if they will all adopt the hand-spun khaddar for their own personal use to the exclusion of all foreign or Indian mill-cloth and if they will themselves religiously spin for a definite period every day and persuade every member of their family to do likewise, and if they will to the extent of their ability introduce the wheel and the use of khaddar among their neighbours, the nation can bring about the boycott of foreign cloth even in a year's time. Even as they may not, on any pretext whatsoever, use foreign cloth, they may not use cloth manufactured in our mills. I must distinguish between the two prohibitions. Boycott of foreign cloth is a vital necessity for all time. There is no question of a permanent national boycott of mill-cloth. But Indian mills alone can never supply the present demand for cloth, whereas the charkha and the hand-loom can. But the khaddar, the product of the charkha, has yet to become popular and universal. It can only be so if the thinking portion of India will make the commencement. They must, therefore, restrict their use of cloth to khaddar only. Our mills need no patronage from us. Their goods are popular enough. Moreover, the nation has no control over the mills. They are not philanthropic institutions. They are frankly selfish. They have their own propaganda. If they recognize the signs of the times, they will help the foreign cloth boycott movement by cheapening their cloth and taking to areas not served at present by khaddar. They can, if they will, avoid competition with khaddar and be satisfied with supplementing it. *Boycott of foreign cloth cannot be immediately accomplished unless every national worker religiously avoids the use of mill-made cloth.* Surely, the proposition is too simple to need any argument. Khaddar, which has to find a market, must command preference among enlightened men.

I have hitherto examined the use of khaddar as the only effective and speedy means of bringing about a successful boycott of foreign cloth as distinguished from and as an alternative to that of Empire goods. But when to this potency of khaddar is added its power to feed the starving millions, the case becomes irresistible.

It is perhaps now easy to understand why a charkha atmosphere has to be created and why every man and woman and child who understands the necessity of the charkha for the national well-being must religiously spin for some time every day. The peasantry of India is among the most industrious in the world as

it is perhaps also the idlest. Both its industry and idleness are imposed upon it. It must work to make its fields yield their harvest. The East India Company by killing hand-spinning made it idle when it had no full labour to do. The peasantry will now return to the charkha only when we set the example. Mere precept will produce little impression upon it. And when thousands spin for love, it is possible to give higher wages for spinning if we would keep the same price for khaddar. I have myself been able to sell khaddar manufactured at the Satyagraha Ashram cheaper because I had maunds of yarn lovingly thrown to me by the Punjabi sisters during my tour in the Punjab in 1919. It was possible for me, if I had liked, to pay their wages to professional spinners, and not reduce the price of khaddar. I did not do so because, at that early stage of the khaddar movement, I was paying so high a price as 4 annas for one pound of yarn indifferently spun.

If the Liberals and the Congressmen, stung by the Kenya decision, hurled the ineffective boycott of Empire goods at the heads of the white Colonists of Kenya, why will they not, in their cooler moments, concentrate their effort upon the complete success of the khaddar movement and thereby ensure the boycott of all foreign cloth? Need I prove that the boycott of foreign cloth will not only bring relief to the Kenya Indians, but it will also bring swaraj?

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54. *NOTES*

To 'A Mohammedan, A Hindu'

A correspondent or correspondents sent some time ago a question of importance for answer in these columns. As the letter was unsigned and as I do not wish to encourage anonymous correspondence, I consigned it to the waste-paper basket. If the correspondent (for I suspect one writer has assumed two names) is serious about his question, he must disclose his identity not for publication but as an earnest of his own *bona fides*.

Pandit Malaviyaji on Moplah Relief

The reader will be glad to learn what Pandit Malaviyaji[1] has to say about Moplah relief. The following is the translation of what he says in a letter written to me in Hindi:

[1] Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946); founder of the Banaras Hindu University; member, Imperial Legislative Council; President of the Indian National Congress, 1909, 1918

I agree with every word of what you have written about helping Moplah women and children.

"Where is the merit in a man who returns good for good? The wise call him only good who does good to the evil-doer. They alone are good who do good to those that do harm to them and these good souls adorn the earth; for it is the better for their birth."

Please do not infer from the verse quoted by me that in my opinion all Moplahs have injured Hindus. But even assuming that all the Moplahs have done us an injury, even then must we serve them in the hour of their need. In such conduct lies the beauty of our religion.

"Let Love conquer hate,
Let the good conquer the evil-doers.
Let a generous heart conquer avarice,
Let Truth conquer falsehood."

Principal Gidwani

In reply to my inquiry, the Administrator of Nabha State has favoured me with the following reply which is dated 12th May 1924.

DEAR SIR,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th of May. I instituted enquiries with regard to Principal Gidwani's condition in jail, with the following results:

Mr. Gidwani is wearing jail clothes, but these are clean, and he is allowed soap to wash them when he desires. He has never fasted since 21st March, 1924. He is in a good state of health, and his weight is 1 maund 38 seers. Up to the present he has received the same food as other convicts in the jail but has been allowed milk on certain occasions on medical grounds. I understand that no difficulties are presented to his receiving visitors, and that only recently he was allowed to receive his wife and brother, and that every facility was provided on that occasion. Under the Jail Rules, visitors can only be received once in six months.

I have personally visited the jail and satisfied myself as to the above facts. Mr. Gidwani asked me for certain facilities, such as the cooking of his own food, provision of vegetables and some ghee, and permission to take exercise. These requests were granted by me. He made no complaints to me as to any rough treatment by the jail authorities or anybody else, although he had an opportunity of doing so as I interviewed him alone.

You seem to be under some misapprehension as to the conditions under which Principal Gidwani is imprisoned. He was sentenced under

> Sections 188 and 145 of the Indian Penal Code in October last together with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Santanam. I, as Administrator, suspended the sentences passed in those cases on condition that these gentlemen left the State and did not return thereto without permission. Mr. Gidwani broke the conditions of the suspension of the sentences when he returned to Nabha State on February the 21st. He is now in jail undergoing the sentences that were passed upon him in the first instance. There is no intention of trying Mr. Gidwani upon any further charge.

Thus Principal Gidwani is to suffer the original two years' imprisonment for having crossed to the Nabha State border, in Mr. Zimand's opinion, in the interest of humanity. Principal Gidwani does not complain because he never asked for his release in the first instance. But what is the public to think of an administration under which a man is imprisoned for doing what he considered was an act of humanity, and which, as a matter of fact, too, resulted in no injury to anybody? If Mr. Zimand is to be believed, Principal Gidwani had no intention of entering the State in the company of the Jatha. I do not suppose it is contended that Principal Gidwani insists upon remaining in the State limits if he is left free. It would, therefore, seem that he is being made to serve the sentence without any just cause whatsoever.

Are Sikhs Hindus?

A friend from the Punjab writes:

> The Akalis here are more or less enraged at your note about Vaikom in which you class them with Mussalmans and Christians as non-Hindus. I have had many people complaining to me that the Sikhs never formally dissociated themselves from Hinduism. And as for some people refusing to be called Hindus, it is pointed out that Swami Shraddhanand[1] himself some time ago took strong exception to be called a Hindu. Several prominent members of the S.G.P.C. are members of the Hindu Sabha; and though, undoubtedly, there is a feeling among one section of Akalis that it is better to disclaim all connection with Hinduism, there is an equally strong section which is conservative on this matter. Of course, they want their temples separated from general Hindu temples and to be under their own control. But this is the case with all Hindu sects. The Jains, so far as I am told, have the same right; and it is pointed out to me that the Sikhs are claiming no more than the Aryas, Brahmos and others not belonging to the orthodox Hindu traditions claim. After close acquaintance with the Sikh leaders here and with some study of the Sikh

[1] 1856-1926; nationalist leader of the Arya Samaj

movement, I myself feel that to class Akalis as non-Hindus is not entirely fair to them.

I am very glad to find that Sikh friends resent my classing them with non-Hindus. I assure them that I had no such intention whatsoever. During my first tour in the Punjab I happened to say in speaking of the Sikhs that, in my opinion, they were a part of the Hindu community. I did so because I knew that millions of Hindus believed in Guru Nanak and that the Granth Saheb was filled with the Hindu spirit and Hindu legends. But a Sikh friend who was present at the meeting took me aside and said with the gravest concern that my inclusion of the Sikhs in the Hindu community had given offence, and the friend advised me in future never to speak of the Sikhs in the same breath as Hindus. During my tour in the Punjab, I found that the caution given by the friend was well-given. For I noticed that many Sikhs regarded themselves as belonging to a religion distinct from Hinduism. I promised the friend never again to refer to the Sikhs as Hindus. Nothing would, therefore, please me better than to find that the separatist tendency is confined only to a very few Sikhs and that the general body regard themselves as Hindus. I have met with the same fate from Arya Samajists. An innocent reference to them as being part of Hindus was also resented. One gentleman felt insulted when, without the slightest intention of hurting his feelings, I referred to him as a Hindu. I soothed him by immediate apology. I have not fared much better with some Jains. During my tour in Maharashtra, I found many Jains telling me that they were a community apart from Hindus. I have never understood the Jain objection, because there is so much in common between Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. I could somewhat understand the Arya Samaj objection, because the Samajists are, if one may say so without giving offence, fanatically hostile to idol-worship and Pauranic literature and everything outside the Vedas and the Upanishads. But Jainism and Buddhism have, so far as I know, no such quarrels with Hinduism. Indeed, Buddhism and Jainism are mighty reforms in Hinduism. Buddhism rightly insisted on internal purity. Its appeal went straight to the heart. It broke down arrogant assumption of superiority. Jainism represents the highest flight of logic. It has taken nothing for granted and has endeavoured to prove metaphysical truth by challenging the intellect. In my opinion, we have hardly touched the vast literature that these two reform movements have produced.

Holding the views I do, I hope my Sikh friends will appreciate the fact that, if I have classed them as non-Hindus, it is out of

delicate regard for their feelings and against my own inclination. So far as the Sikh kitchen is concerned, it is a menace whether the Sikhs may be regarded as Hindus or non-Hindus. All this outside intrusion—for I cannot call it anything else—takes no note of the orthodox sensitiveness or the difficulty of the Durbar. And now that I have learnt the facts more fully about the Sikh kitchen, I cannot help saying that it compromises the self-respect of the Kerala people. They are not living in starvation. If I was a volunteer, I would rather starve than be fed by outside charity, whether Hindu or non-Hindu. Surely, the Kerala people must be trusted to see to the feeding of their volunteers.

Virtue Penalized

> The renter's explanation for not working the shop and for not tapping and drawing toddy from the trees for the shop unsatisfactory. He is fined Rs. 50.

Such is the entry in the proceedings of the Revenue Divisional Officer of Namakal in the Madras Presidency. The reader knows that the shop is a drink shop. The renter's explanation was that the drinkers had decided not to drink and, therefore, he saw no use in keeping the shop open. He was, however, willing to pay the rent. This explanation was not satisfactory. Nor was it enough that the abstaining villagers were ready to pay the Government the whole year's stipulated profits from the drink traffic for the luxury of indulging in their newly acquired virtue of abstinence. That was not to be, for the law was against them. If the whole of the proceedings were legally examined, it would probably be found that the officials concerned could give no other decision. They are not at fault. It is the system that is bad, for in that system revenue is the primary consideration, not the health of the soul or the body. Had it been otherwise, the drink and the opium traffic would have gone long ago. One blessing conferred upon the people by the reforms is that the drink and the drug revenue is earmarked for the education of our children. I do hope that the villagers and the poor renter will have the strength to withstand all fines and other penalties for the reform they have inaugurated.

Khadi Umbrellas

A correspondent who is a thorough believer in khaddar asks what one should do for umbrellas. I do not regard umbrellas as clothing and personally I should not hesitate to use a foreign umbrella. But I have seen umbrellas covered with khaddar. I know too that it is possible by smearing khaddar with water-proof composition

to make it water-proof. It may be an expensive process but a determined man will not count the cost. I know also a poor man's umbrella. Prisoners are not allowed the use of umbrellas except convict-warders on out-door duty. We had in Yeravda very useful and more effective protection against rain by tucking one corner into another of a gunny-bag and hanging it loosely on the head.

The correspondent is also puzzled over the use of silk dhotis for sacred wear. For me khadi is more sacred than silk, foreign or homespun, for the simple reason that silk manufacture is confined to a few thousands; yarn manufacture extends to millions. But the movement does permit one to use homespun khaddar. Here again, coarse woollen dhotis are suggested as a perfect substitute for silk. It is not without difficulty that one can procure hand-spun silk and then there is always doubt whether the silk yarn is foreign or homespun.

Parody of Religion

A Delhi correspondent writes:

> There are about sixty houses of Chamars in Rohed in the district of Rohtak. These are all labourers and have no property rights in the village land. They used to take water from the village pond so long as it was available. But after that supply failed, they were at the mercy of the zemindars for the well water. The latter would keep them waiting for hours before condescending to issue it to the poor untouchables. Latterly, in order to avoid this delay, a committee was appointed with a view to devise a remedy. This committee contained one Chamar. It decided that the Chamars should appoint a member of the Mali (gardener) caste to draw water for them and pay him Rs. 15 per month. The Chamars were disposed to agree, but now they feel that they ought not to pay what is after all, a heavy and iniquitous monthly tax upon them. What is one to do? Should the Chamars approach the Government officials for a piece of land to dig their own well? Will it not be in conflict with Non-co-operation?

The answer to the question asked is exceedingly simple. The Chamars are non-co-operators. They have no politics. But the staunchest non-co-operator is not precluded from buying or getting land from the Government for necessary purposes. The less he does so, undoubtedly the better. But there is no bar against it in the Congress resolution. A non-co-operator who understands the spirit of the resolution will certainly not buy land from the Government for profit. In the case in point, the land is required for the necessaries that nature has imposed upon us. And if the Chamars can

get land from the Government for digging a well, the staunchest non-co-operator, in my opinion, need not hesitate to assist them to get it.

But the answer to the question is the least difficult part of my task. What is to be said of the Hindu zemindars who would not have the decency and the ordinary humanity to issue water in due time to men who belong to their own religion and who serve them in hundreds of ways? And all this callousness in the name of religion? If their well is likely to be polluted by the Chamars using them, why will *they* not pay the gardener for the luxury of enjoying their exclusiveness? Why will they not give them a plot of land for digging a well in it? Does my correspondent know whether the zemindars have been approached for a plot of land? If a deputation waits on them, they will perhaps not only grant a plot, but have a well dug at their expense. If the attempt has not been made, it should be made. Immediate relief may be obtained by securing a piece of land from the Government. But the campaign against untouchability is an attempt to blot it out from Hinduism. No numbers of separate wells will do it. Hindu reformers have, therefore, a double task before them to secure relief for the suffering brethren, and to change, by a proper appeal to them, the hearts of those who believe in the evil and savage custom of regarding our own kith and kin as untouchables.

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55. *SAROJINI'S SPEECH TO CHILDREN*

The following speech[1] reported by the *Natal Mercury* of Durban cannot fail to be of interest to the readers of *Y.I.* I give it with the *Mercury's* appreciatory note.

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[1] In her speech, Sarojini Naidu had advised the children to be good to each other irrespective of the race they might belong to. Her concluding words were: "You are going to say: 'We will not live in a country where there is division between race and race, where there is hatred and selfishness.' When you love the whole world, the whole world will he full of peace and joy."

56. *STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA*

[BOMBAY,]
May 22, 1924

After having discussed with the Swarajist friends the vexed question of entry into the Legislative Assembly and the Councils by the Congressmen,[1] I am sorry to have to say that I have not been able to see eye to eye with the Swarajists. I assure the public that there has been no lack of willingness or effort on my part to accept the Swarajist position. My task would be much simpler if I could identify myself with it. It can be no pleasure to me to oppose even in thought the most valued and respected leaders, some of whom have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the motherland, but, in spite of my effort and willingness, I have failed to be convinced by their argument.

Nor is the difference between them and myself one of mere detail. There is an honest and fundamental difference. I retain the opinion that Council-entry is inconsistent with non-co-operation as I conceive it. Nor is this difference a mere matter of interpretation of the word "non-co-operation", but relates to the essential mental attitude resulting in different treatment of vital problems. It is with reference to such mental attitude that the success or the failure of the triple boycott is to be judged and not merely by a reference to the actual results attained. It is from that point of view that I say that to be out of the legislative bodies is far more advantageous to the country than to be in them.

I have, however, failed to convince my Swarajist friends. But I recognize that, so long as they think otherwise, their place is undoubtedly in the Councils. It is the best for us all. It was hardly to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by the arguments I advanced in the course of the conversations. They are many of them amongst the ablest, most experienced and honest patriots. They have not entered the legislative bodies without full deliberation and they must not be expected to retire from the position until experience has convinced them of the futility of their methods.

[1] The week-long consultations between Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das had proved inconclusive. For the Swarajists' statement, *vide* Appendix II.

The question, therefore, before the country is not an examination and determination of the merits of the Swarajist view and mine. The question is: what is to be done now regarding Council-entry as a settled fact? Are the Non-co-operators to keep up their hostility against the Swarajists' method or are they to remain neutral and even help, whenever it is possible or consistent with their principles?

The Delhi and Cocanada resolutions have permitted those Congressmen who have no conscientious scruples to enter the Councils and the Assembly, if they want to do so . In my opinion, the Swarajists are therefore justified in entering the legislative bodies and expecting perfect neutrality on the part of the "No-changers". They are also justified in resorting to obstruction, because such was their policy and the Congress laid down no conditions as to their entry. If the work of the Swarajists prospers and the country benefits, such an ocular demonstration cannot but convince honest sceptics like me of our error, and I know the Swarajists to be patriotic enough to retrace their steps when experience has disillusioned them.

I would, therefore, be no party to putting any obstacles in their way or to carrying on any propaganda against the Swarajists' entry into the Legislatures, though I cannot actively help them in a project in which I do not believe. The purpose of the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions was to allow the Swarajists a chance of trying the method of Council-entry and that purpose can be served only if the "No-changers", with scrupulous honesty, allow the Swarajists full liberty to pursue their programme in the Councils, unfettered by any obstruction from them.

With regard to the method of work in the Councils, I will say that I would enter a legislative body if only I found that I could at all use it to advantage. If, therefore, I enter the Councils, I should, without following a general policy of obstruction, endeavour to give strength to the Constructive Programme of the Congress. I should, therefore, move resolutions requiring the Central or the Provincial Government, as the case may be,

(1) To make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar;

(2) To impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth;

(3) To abolish the drink and drug revenue; and

(4) At least correspondingly reduce the army expenditure.

If the Government refuses to enforce such resolutions when carried in the Legislatures, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the

Government would not dissolve, I should resign my seat and prepare the country for civil disobedience. When that stage is reached, the Swarajists will find me ready to work with and under them.

My test of fitness for civil disobedience remains the same as before. During the state of probation, I should advise the "No-changers" not to worry about what the Swarajists are doing or saying and to prove their own faith by prosecuting the Constructive Programme with undivided energy and concentration. The khaddar and the national schools are enough to occupy every available worker who believes in quiet, honest and undemonstrative work. The Hindu-Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. The "No-changers" can justify their opposition to Council-entry only by showing the results of their application through the Constructive Programme even as the "Pro-changers" must justify their entry by results.

The "No-changers" are in one respect in an advantageous position; for they can secure the co-operation of the "Pro-changers". The latter have declared their faith in the Constructive Programme, but their contention is that by itself, the Constructive Programme cannot enable the country to reach the goal. In the prosecution, however, of the Constructive Programme outside the Legislatures, all "No-changers", "Pro-changers" and others can, if they will, work in unison through their respective organizations if necessary.

The statement is incomplete without an examination of the working of the Congress organization. I hold drastic and definite views in the matter, but I must reserve their expression for a future, though early, occasion.

The Hindu, 23-5-1924

57. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

Vaisakha Vad 5 [*May 23, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Since you have stayed on, do come. But you need not come if you are leaving immediately. Think of returning from Deolali only after you have completely regained your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. BEN VASUMATI
DAULATRAI KASIRAM & CO.
RAVAL BUILDING
LAMINGTON ROAD
BOMBAY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 442. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

58. *INSTRUCTIONS TO SECRETARY*

[On or after *May 23, 1924*][2]

Wire "Certainly Not".

From a photostat of the draft: S.N. 10328

[1] The postmark bears the date 24-5-1924. The letter was, however, written on *Vaisakha Vad* 5, i.e., 23-5-1924.

[2] The instructions were written on a telegram received from Dipak Chowdhari on May 23, 1924, which read: "If mother approves do you sanction my a minor's joining Tarkeshwar Satyagraha."

59. LETTER TO G. V. SUBBA RAO

May 24, 1924

DEAR MR. SUBBA RAO,

[I have known] Sjt. Aurobindo Ghosh's[1] views throu[gh] my son, who specially saw him, and then throu[gh] Mr. Das. I agree that our basis should be spiritual. And I am trying in my own humble way to conduct every activity from a spiritual point of view.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 3623

60. LETTER TO ALI HASSAN[2]

ANDHERI,
May 24, 1924

DEAR MR. HASSAN,

I thank you for your letter. I do not share your opinion that Mussalmans have lost by Non-co-operation work. I share[the] view that Mussalmans are [not][3] superior to Hindus in administrative ability. On the general question you will find my views developed from time to time in my writings.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm of a newspaper cutting: S.N. 10469

[1] 1872-1950; mystic, poet and philosopher; settled at Pondicherry in 1910

[2] This was in reply to an open letter dated May 15, 1924, from Ali Hassan, Bar-at-Law, Patna, who wrote that the Non-co-operation movement had completely ruined the Muslims and their institutions like the Aligarh University, etc. He requested Gandhiji to give up the movement and ask Hindus to treat Muslims better and accept their general superiority. Ali Hassan had sent the correspondence to *New India* for publication.

[3] *Vide* "Notes", 10-7-1924.

61. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Vaisakha Vad 6 [*May 24, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDAS,

The Mahars[2] living in this place tell me that you have promised to pay them Rs. 30,000/- for constructing a temple and a hostel, provided I approve of the proposal. Have you really told them any such thing? The name of their leader is Bhosle.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Please send your reply to Sabarmati. I shall reach there on Thursday.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6046. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

62. MY REQUEST

I shall have reached Satyagraha Ashram some time next week.[3] I have to say regretfully that I have not yet recovered sufficient strength to be able to tolerate noise, attend meetings or make speeches. Even moving about is only possible to a certain extent. In my present state, the hope that I shall be able to see many men and women should be given up both by them and me. I know that many are anxious to meet me. I am as eager for such meeting as they are. For the time being, however, we both must restrain our desire. Everyone, therefore, should for the present assume that I have not yet entered Gujarat at all. Let everyone take it that I have gone to the Ashram for change of air as I had gone to Juhu.[4] If all brothers and sisters oblige me to this extent, I shall have some peace and be able to carry the burden of work I have to.

[1] The letter was written from Juhu, where Gandhiji was convalescing. He reached Sabarmati, as stated in the postscript, on Thursday, May 29, 1924. In 1924, *Vaisakha Vad* 6 fell on May 24.

[2] People belonging to the Depressed Class in Maharashtra

[3] Gandhiji was arrested on March 10, 1922. He returned to the Ashram on May 29, 1924, after a lapse of 26 months.

[4] After his release on February 5, 1924, from the Yeravda prison, Gandhiji stayed at Juhu, a suburb of Bombay, from March 11 to May 28.

Almost all the energy I have is spent in running *Navajivan* and *Young India*.[1] With what is left I can just cope with my correspondence. I am, of course, continuing to observe silence on Mondays and Wednesdays.[2] I utilize those days for writing for my papers. On those days, therefore, I would not desire to see anyone. On the other days, I intend to see visitors from 4 to 6 in the evening, as I do in Juhu. On these days, too, I intend to observe silence in the morning. If I do not observe this rule, I cannot avoid meeting people who turn up unexpectedly to see me and, if I see them, I cannot cope with my work.

I desire to observe this rule scrupulously till the end of July at any rate. What I shall do thereafter will depend on the state of my health and the volume of work.

This, then, is my request for the sake of my physical well-being.

The second request concerns our national work. There is a lot to be done, about which I have been giving my views through the pages of *Navajivan*. But may I ask for one favour? Am I fated to see Gujaratis still wearing foreign cloth? Will the time never come when I shall see Gujarat clothed exclusively in khadi? Vallabhbhai has planned to raise a purse of Rs. 10 lakhs. Will he not plan to make Gujarat completely khadi-minded? If anyone asked me whether I would have from Gujarat a crore of rupees or that it should become completely khadi-minded, I would say at once, without the slightest hesitation, that I would rather see Gujarat become khadi-minded than give me a crore of rupees.

I do not wish to announce the day of my departure from Bombay. Let no one be curious to find out. I desire that even those who come to know it do not crowd at the station. How much yarn could those people produce if they spent the time in spinning instead of coming to the station? If we devote half of our spare time to spinning, we can easily produce all the yarn needed by the country.

Simple Calculation

The average annual per capita requirement of cloth comes to 13 yards. Let us assume that this quantity of cloth weighs three seers. So much can be easily produced by one person if he spins no more than half an hour daily. That is to say, if half the popu-

[1] Gandhiji resumed editorship of these two weeklies in the first week of April 1924.

[2] On March 17, 1924, Gandhiji resumed the practice of observing silence every Monday. On April 5, 1924, he also started the practice of observing silence on Wednesdays.

lation spins only for one hour a day it can supply the yarn needs of the entire country. May I hope that, instead of taking the trouble to come to the station, my brothers and sisters will restrain their eagerness and give that time to spinning?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

63. "BRAHMACHARYA"

It is not easy to write on this subject. But my own experience is so wide that I always wish to give some of it to the reader. Many letters which I have received have strengthened that wish.

A friend asks: "What is *brahmacharya*? Is perfect observance of *brahmacharya* possible? If it is, do you observe it so?

The full and correct meaning of *brahmacharya* is search for the *brahman*. As the *brahman* is immanent in everyone, it can be known through contemplation and the inner illumination resulting from it. This illumination is not possible without complete control over the senses. Hence, *brahmacharya* means control in thought, speech and action of all senses, at all places and at all times.

The man or woman who observes such perfect *brahmacharya* is totally free from disease and, therefore, he or she lives ever in the presence of God, is like God.

I have no doubt that complete observance of such *brahmacharya* in thought, speech and action is possible. I regret to say that I have not attained to the state of such perfect *brahmacharya*. I am striving every moment to reach it. I have not given up the hope of attaining that state in this very life. I have acquired control over my body. I can guard myself during the waking state. I have acquired fairly good control over speech. I have yet to gain good enough control over my thoughts. When I begin to think about a certain matter, I may have thoughts about other matters too, resulting in a constant clashing of thoughts.

Even so, in my waking moments I am able to stop such clash of thoughts. I have attained a state, it can be claimed, in which ugly thoughts at any rate do not trouble me. But I have less control over my thoughts during sleep. In that state, all manner of thoughts come to me, even strange dreams, and sometimes desire for indulgences familiar to the body also wakes up in me. When the thoughts are unclean, there may be involuntary discharge too. This condition is possible only in a life troubled by desire.

The disturbances in my thoughts are becoming weaker, but have not ceased altogether. Had I acquired complete mastery over my thoughts, I would not have been, during the last ten years, afflicted with the three diseases of pleurisy, dysentery and appendicitis.[1] I believe that the body encasing a healthy *atman* is bound to be healthy. Hence, as the *atman* becomes healthier—is less and less troubled by desire—the body too becomes healthier. This does not mean that a healthy body is necessarily a strong body. It is only in a lean body that a strong *atman* lives. As the *atman* grows in strength, the body becomes leaner. A perfectly healthy body can be very lean. A strong body usually suffers from some disease. Even if it has no disease, it is quick to catch infection or contract a disease, whereas a perfectly healthy body will never catch an infection. Pure blood has the property of keeping off destructive germs of infection.

Such a wonderful state is certainly difficult to attain. Else I would have reached it, for, as my *atman* testifies, I would not be remiss in taking all measures necessary for attaining it. There is nothing in this world which can keep me from striving for it. But it is not easy for everyone to undo the accumulated effects of his past. Despite this delay, however, I have not been in the least disheartened, for I am able to visualize the desireless state, am able to glimpse it faintly, and the progress I have made makes me hopeful rather than otherwise. Moreover, even if I should die without realizing my hope, I do not believe that I would have failed in my striving. I am as certain of rebirth as that this body exists. I am sure, therefore, that even a modest effort does not go in vain.

I have given this account of my experiences only in order that my correspondents and others in the same position may have patience and self-confidence. All have the same *atman*. The power of the *atman* is the same in all. Only, it has been manifested in some and in others it is still to be manifested. They too, if they try, will have like experience.

So far I have discussed *brahmacharya* in its comprehensive meaning. The conventional and commonly accepted meaning of *brahmacharya* is, simply, control of the sex impulse in thought, speech and action. This view of it is realistic, for observance of *brahmacharya* in this sense is believed to be very difficult. Control over the palate has not been equally emphasized, and that has made control of the sex impulse more difficult. It has become al-

[1] Gandhiji had an attack of pleurisy in October 1914, of dysentery in August 1918 and of appendicitis in January 1924.

most impossible. Again, the experience of doctors tells us that a person whose body is weakened by disease is more troubled by sex desire and this is an additional reason why observance of *brahmacharya* seems difficult to our disease-ridden people.

I have referred above to a body being lean but healthy. No one should take me to mean that one need not develop physical strength. I have merely expressed, in my imperfect language, my idea about *brahmacharya* in its finest aspect. What I have said may possibly be misunderstood. Anyone who wishes to acquire complete control over all the senses has no choice, ultimately, but to welcome his body becoming lean. When blind love of the body and attachment for it decline, no desire for physical strength will be left.

But the body of a *brahmachari* who has conquered sex desire ought to be strong and glowing with vigour. Even the observance of this *brahmacharya* raises one above the common level. He who does not feel physical urge even in a dream deserves to be honoured by the world. There is little doubt that it is easy for such a one to exercise self-control in other matters.

About *brahmacharya* in this sense, another friend writes:

> My condition is pitiable. Whether I am chanting the name of God, whether I am in the office or walking in the street, whether I am reading at night or working, I get those very thoughts. What should I do to control my thoughts? How can one develop the same regard for every woman as one has for one's mother? What should be done so that the eyes will shine with nothing but pure affection? What is the way to be free from evil thoughts? I have preserved with me your article[1] on *brahmacharya*, but in this place it is of no help to me at all.

This is a touching plight. Many find themselves in such a condition. But there is no cause for apprehension as long as one's mind wrestles with thoughts of that kind. If the eyes offend, they should be closed. If the ears offend, they should be plugged with cottonwool. It is a good habit to walk with one's eyes always on the ground. They will, then, get no opportunity at all to see anything else. One should run away from a place where people are talking obscene things or singing obscene songs. One must acquire control over the palate.

It is my experience that anyone who has not conquered the palate cannot conquer the sex impulse. It is very difficult to conquer the palate. But victory over it is essential for the other victory. One way to conquer the palace is to give up condiments

[1] Presumably, "How Celibacy Can Be Observed", 10-11-1921; *vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 416-8.

wholly or as far as possible, and another effective way is to keep thinking that we eat merely to keep the body and soul together, and that we would never indulge the palate. We breathe not for the pleasure of breathing, but for taking in air. We drink water to slake thirst and, likewise, we should eat only to satisfy hunger. Right from childhood, our parents develop in us the opposite habit. They spoil us by teaching us to enjoy all manner of delicacies, which they do, not for our nourishment, but to show their love for us. We have to fight such tendencies.

But the golden rule for conquering the sex impulse is to keep repeating the magic name of Rama or some such holy word. Even the *Dwadash-mantra*[1] serves the same purpose. One may choose the *mantra* to be chanted as prompted by one's faith. I have suggested the name of Rama because I was initiated into it from my childhood and have always found support in it. Whichever *mantra* we choose, we must become one with it. Even if other thoughts distract us while we .repeat the *mantra*, I have no doubt at all that anyone who keeps repeating it with faith will succeed ultimately. The *mantra* will come to be the support of one's life and save one from all dangers. No one should have recourse to such a holy *mantra* for material gain. The miracle of the *mantra* lies in preserving our moral purity and everyone who tries will have that experience in a short while. Of course, we should remember that this *mantra* is not to be repeated parrot-wise; it should be repeated with one's whole being. The parrot repeats such *mantras* mechanically; we should do so intelligently, with purpose to keep away unwanted thoughts and with faith in the efficacy of the *mantra*.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 25-5-1924

[1] *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*: "Salutation to Lord Vasudeva"; this *mantra* or formula has twelve syllables; hence *dwadash*.

64. MILL-HANDS AND KHADI

The sixth issue of the *Khadi Patrika*[1] gives a detailed account of the khadi propaganda which is being carried on among the mill-hands of Ahmedabad. One learns from it that some workers have resolved to wear khadi exclusively and some others to have the spinning-wheel and the loom in their homes. The workers are running twenty schools and eight hundred children study in them. All of them wear khadi. To supply their needs, the organizers have got stitched long shirts, caps, etc., and as these were mass-produced, the stitching costs of the long shirt and the cap came to no more than two annas and nine pies for the former and six pies for the latter.

Majoor Sandesh[2] contains the following interesting details:

> If you buy a pound of khadi:
>
> Ten annas will go to one of our peasants.
>
> One-and-a-half to two annas will go to one of our poor carders.
>
> Four to six annas will go to some poor woman who spun the yarn.
>
> Eight to nine annas will go to some weaver who wove the yarn spun by those sisters.
>
> Three-quarters of an anna will go to one of our washermen.
>
> If you wear khadi, all this money will remain in our country and will go to some of our poor brothers and sisters.

These facts deserve to be noted not only by the workers but by every man and woman.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

[1] *Khadi Samachar Patrika*, edited by Maganlal Gandhi, Sabarmati Ashram

[2] Periodical published by the Majoor Mahajan, the textile workers' union, Ahmedabad

65. SATYAGRAHI REPROACHES

The mention of satyagrahi terms of reproach in the article "Impatient Kathiawar" has prompted a correspondent to ask for a list of such terms, so that he may learn them and start using them! The first condition is that a non-satyagrahi or a *duragrahi*[1] should never use such terms. If any such person uses them, they will be altogether offensive in his mouth. If one understands this rule, one will not need a list.

Satyagrahi abuses are without number. As love has no limit, so these terms have none. If I want to reproach Vallabhbhai in satyagrahi fashion, I would say: "That rogue of a Patel has shed everything of his and has now started looting others. That is why he does not think much of ten lakhs of rupees." If we wish to heap satyagrahi abuses on Abbas Saheb[2], we would say: "Why should the old man care? He has abandoned his family and wanders about, minding neither cold nor heat, and is ever bothering people! Since he is an old man, who can discourage him?" If a similar reproach is to be hurled at Pattani Saheb, we may say: "He makes the rulers of Kathiawar dance; he sends up the stock of Bhavnagar by flattering Governors and now he has started fooling the Kathiawaris! But, if we are true Kathiawaris, and especially true citizens of Bhavnagar, we shall teach him a lesson. We certainly are not gullible like the rulers and the white sahebs! We believe in 'tit for tat' !"

I have here illustrated harmless uses of satyagrahi reproach. Even I do not know all possible uses of such terms. I am only an aspirant towards love; were I completely filled with love, I could even give a list of reproaches such as were used by the *gopis*[3]. Only they could apply to Lord Krishna epithets like "butter-thief", "robber", etc. A man like Narasinh Mehta called a life-long celibate like Krishna "adulterous" and the latter bore this reproach

[1] One who is obstinate in a wrong cause, or in a right cause but in a wrong manner

[2] Abbas Tyabji (1853-1936); nationalist Muslim leader of Gujarat

[3] The cowherd girls who gave their love to the boy Krishna

and helped him to give ceremonial presents to his daughters-in-law when the occasion required.[1]

Only persons like Shukdevji[2] who are completely innocent in thought all their lives can know how all this happens. The epithet "onion-thief", which I used for Mohanlal Pandya, is an instance in the recent history of Gujarat similar to the description used by the *gopis*. I may further inform readers that it is a resident of Bhavnagar who has asked for a list of satyagrahi terms of reproach. I hope he will think out others from the illustrations I have given. I am sure that, if the residents of Bhavnagar learn this lesson, they can still hold the Kathiawar Political Conference in Bhavnagar unconditionally. But

"The path of truth is for the brave,
Never for the cowardly."[3]

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

66. "A MUSLIM"

A correspondent signing himself "A Muslim" has sent me a letter about the current tension between the Hindus and Muslims in Visnagar[4]. Some of the facts mentioned in it possibly deserve publicity but, since I do not wish to encourage anonymous letters and the statements made in such letters always lack credibility, I am unable to publish the particulars given in this letter. If the correspondent desires that the facts as stated by him should be published, he should write to me another letter giving particulars which can be verified, as his anonymous letter has been destroyed.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

[1] Narasinh Mehta was too poor to be able to fulfil the customary obligations when his daughter was to have her first child, and legend has it that Krishna appeared on the scene as a devout merchant and distributed generous gifts among the in-laws.

[2] A youthful sage who was as pure in his thoughts as a child

[3] Adapted from the opening line of a Gujarati poem by Pritamdas, a Vedantic poet of the eighteenth century

[4] Town in North Gujarat

67. *KATHIAWAR RAJPUT CONFERENCE*[1]

I wish very much to attend this Conference which is about to meet, but that seems quite impossible.

Kathiawar was a land of warriors. The valour of the Rajputs is world-renowned. But the Rajputs of today are not likely to become brave by singing praises of their valour in the past. When the Brahmin gave up pursuit of higher knowledge, the Rajput became commerce-minded, forsaking his traditional duty of defending people, and the *Vania*[2] took to paid service, who can blame the Sudra if he ceased to be a servant? When the four castes fell, they gave rise, against the spirit of religion, to a fifth one and this came to be looked upon as a class of untouchables. Having created this fifth class, the four castes kept it in suppression and, in consequence, they themselves came to be suppressed and fell.

Who will rescue the Hindus from this plight? If the Hindus are not saved, the Muslims also cannot escape the same fate. If twenty-two crores fall, surely the other seven crores cannot survive. When a train is in motion, we cannot stand close to it because its velocity is likely to drag us along.

India's freedom thus lies in the regeneration of the Hindus. The country can be saved only if this regeneration is religious in character. If the Hindus try to imitate the West in order to acquire its physical strength, they will themselves fall and bring down others as well.

Who will save this fallen Hindu society? Who will inspire courage in the timid? Surely, this duty belongs to the Kshatriya. If, therefore, the Rajput Conference wants to understand its duty and discharge it, the Rajputs will have to consider what their dharma is.

For protecting others, it is not necessary to possess the strength of the sword. The age of such strength has passed, or is passing. The world has had plenty of experience of the sword and has had enough of it. Even the West seems to have tired of it. He who protects others by killing the enemy is no Kshatriya; he is a true Kshatriya who protects others by laying down his own life. He is no brave man who runs away from danger; one who stands

[1] Held, presumably, in June 1924; *vide* "The Purdah and the Pledge", 22-6-1924.

[2] Member of mercantile community

firm, chest forward, and bears blows without striking back is a Kshatriya.

But let us suppose for a moment that the sword is necessary. What then? If Rama used it, it was after he had purified himself through *tapascharya* by living in the forest for fourteen years. The Pandavas, too, lived in the forest. Arjuna[1] went to god Indra[2] himself and obtained divine weapons. One must get the power which comes through *tapas*[3] before acquiring the strength of arms. If this is not done, the result would be senseless fighting as among the Yadavas[4] and, just as the latter destroyed themselves with their own arms, our weapons would kill us.

Hence the first task before the Rajput Conference is to raise the Rajputs. A Rajput may talk of his rights, but he should first talk of his duty. He should give up addictions, adopt simplicity, befriend the poorest among Kathiawaris, share his sufferings and serve him. No one can deprive him of this right to serve. If anyone in Kathiawar is forced to leave it, a Rajput should feel ashamed of it. There's the wherewithal of life where there are the spinning-wheel, the carding-bow and the loom. Why do Kathiawaris leave the heavenly climate of the region for the foul air of Bombay? It is for the Rajputs, more than for others, to answer this question. The discredit for this should certainly go to the rulers. If the rulers of Kathiawar concern themselves only with the well-being of their subjects, why should the latter have to leave their land? The rulers will not, of course, be present at the Rajput Conference but, if the Rajputs mean it, even they will understand. This is an age of democracy and so the rulers will become what the subjects are and remain so. The Rajputs are in a position to make a worthy contribution to the national awakening.

If the members of the Conference spend more time examining their own shortcomings than spotting out those of others, they will be showing the way on the royal road. Nowadays we blame others for our sufferings; we forget or wish to forget that we ourselves are responsible for them. If there is none to tolerate tyranny, what can the tyrant do? So long as we remain weak enough to be enslaved, there will be people who will seek to enslave us. It is an easy, though useless, exercise to abuse such people. It is cer-

[1] The most valiant of the five Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*

[2] King of the gods

[3] Austerities

[4] Shri Krishna's kinsmen; with the advent of the Age of Strife, they were possessed by the spirit of evil and, after an orgy of drinking, destroyed themselves by fighting against one another.

tainly difficult to understand our own weakness and remove it, but that is the only course which will yield results. And since the means of removing it is in our own hands, no one can deprive us of it.

It is my earnest appeal to the members of the Rajput Conference that they give their most serious attention to this suggestion and do some self-examination.

Finally, let me give them a little advice from experience. Let them beware of speeches and speech-makers. They would do well to keep away from these. Work will be done better if it is done in silence. One who goes on shouting about his hunger will not satisfy the hunger of the hungry, but a good man, dumb from birth, taking a handful of *bajra*[1] to them, will bring light to their eyes, colour to their cheeks and a smile to their lips. They will bless the dumb man from the depth of their hearts. God does not teach us through speeches, but He ever remains active. He is awake even when we are asleep. He can spare no time from His work to make speeches. I request the Rajputs to devote themselves exclusively to work, and thus set an example to other workers of Kathiawar who are all too ready with the tongue, but in action are clever diplomats.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

68. HELP TO MOPLAHS

Bharatabhushan Pandit Malaviya writes as follows concerning my appeal for help to Moplahs:[2]

I have so far received Rs. 600 only for Moplah relief,—Rs. 500 having been contributed by a Bohra gentleman. I hope others also will contribute, each according to his or her capacity.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

[1] Coarse millet

[2] For the original letter, *vide* p. 103.

69. TRIUMPH OF SPRING

May 25, 1924

The poet[1] killed Pandu and burnt Madri and thus celebrated the triumph of spring. In the *Chaitra* issue of *Vasant*, Shri Anandshankarbhai[2] has tried to celebrate a somewhat similar triumph of a violent nature. He has attempted to do so by attributing to me certain views about mill-cloth. If he succeeds in his attempt, the cause of poor khadi would be completely ruined. Hence, we deem it our duty to prevent the success of this violent attack.

The reader is well aware that I seldom interest myself in criticizing any newspaper or individual. Such criticism seems pointless to me; it gives rise to unnecessary controversy and sometimes even ill feeling. I have no cause for fear in regard to Shri Anandshankar's articles. Between us there may be differences of opinion, but there can be no misunderstanding. As I write this, a co-worker puts in my hand the note in *Vasant* which I have referred to. I do not, therefore, wish to check the desire to reply to it. However, readers should not hope that I shall always be ready to enter into such friendly controversies even with *Vasant*. My duty is to place my ideas before the public and, if any issues arise, to solve them from a distance. I always regard myself as vanquished by everyone. I am never keen to convince people through arguments, and I have often found that the imperfect language in which the imperfect thoughts of an imperfect man are expressed cannot explain his meaning fully. Moreover, if the reader's impatience and opposition to the author's views are added to the threefold imperfection, they would further diminish his capacity to understand the argument. It is because I believe that, in such circumstances, the proper thing is to say little and let work speak for itself, that I do not enter into argument and, in consequence, do not need to read many newspapers.

[1] Manishankar Bhatt, who wrote a poem entitled *Vasant-Vijaya*, "Triumph of Spring", on the *Mahabharata* story of how Pandu, father of the Pandava heroes, met his death. Yielding to the influence of spring, Pandu disregarded the curse on him and sought union with his wife, Madri, and died in consequence. Madri, too, immolated herself on the funeral pyre.

[2] Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva (1869-1942); Sanskrit scholar and Gujarati writer, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University, 1920-37; founded and edited *Vasant*, a Gujarati journal

The note in *Vasant* is itself a good instance of what I have said. Had Anandshankarbhai fully understood my views, he would have found nothing to say against them, or, if he had thought it necessary to write anything, it would have been to welcome the movement to popularize the exclusive use of khadi and this would have made my task and that of Gujarat, as also the path of swaraj, easy. But how can I expect that he would understand them? Why should he or anyone else read what I have written elsewhere in this connection? They naturally form their opinions on the basis of what they happen to read or see. I am certainly to blame for going on writing on the subject though aware of this difficulty. If one must write, one should use such language as will admit of no misconstruction. But, then, if one can command such language, need one write? Only an imperfect person resorts to writing. Hence, we have no choice but to tolerate each other's failings. If we keep trying to overcome our failings and in the meantime maintain cordial relations with others, we may not reach perfection, but we shall certainly make some progress towards our goal.

It would be simpler for me and the reader if I re-state my ideas rather than try to reply to Anandshankarbhai's criticism:

1. I have no particular love or dislike for the textile industry.
2. Even if there were no textile mills, India could meet its requirement of cloth by means of the spinning-wheel and the handloom. There is enough evidence to prove this.
3. Mill-made cloth requires no encouragement, as that industry faces no risks.
4. There is, for the seven lakh villages of India, only one possible cottage industry to supplement agriculture, and that is spinning and weaving.
5. The use of khadi is still new. It has not yet gained a permanent place and has to make its way against foreign and mill-made cloth.
6. Only a small section of the public is within the reach of the present movement; if even this section is permitted to wear mill-made cloth, who will be left to use khadi and when will they come to use it? If it is possible to popularize khadi even in some measure, that can be done only when this small section of society learns to regard the use of khadi as a religious duty and insists on wearing it.
7. It is essential to boycott foreign cloth. It is a threat to the interests of the textile mills in India. I see no happy signs of Indians taking to the use of khadi immediately; hence, Indian

mill-made cloth has ample scope. It has reason to fear not khadi but foreign cloth. Hence, I should certainly like to see sufficient import duties levied to save the textile industry from this danger.

8. I believe that even the spinning-wheel and the hammer are machines. I have always accepted, and still accept, the principle that external machinery is unnecessary. I believe likewise in the need for self-control in regard to outward possessions. The West believes in just the opposite. In other words, from its point of view, progress consists in increasing use of machines. Believers in both these principles give importance to machinery. Ancient civilization regards it as a necessary evil and assigns it a secondary place; modern civilization welcomes it as something desirable.

9. History does not tell us that khadi went out of use because foreign cloth was better and cheaper. Even today, foreign cloth cannot compete with the better sort of khadi. Cloth like the *shabnam*[1] muslin of Dacca has disappeared for ever. When foreign cloth was first introduced, it was not even cheap. History tells us, on the contrary, that the East India Company deliberately destroyed the spinning and weaving industries and, by securing various forms of protection, made us accept foreign cloth. I have not invented this history out of my ignorance. I have gathered it from Shri Romesh Chandra Dutt's[2] vast storehouse of knowledge. I am not aware of these assertions having been disputed to this day; if this belief of mine is erroneous, I shall certainly be ready to revise it.

10. The power of khadi is immeasurable. It need not compete with mill-made cloth in order to increase it. It is always increasing. Whoever wishes to examine this can compare the fine khadi that is being produced today with what little was produced four years ago. I was surprised even by the change that I saw when I came out after two years of imprisonment. Today, khadi is produced in every home. By and by, it will not even require heavy implements, and so long as art and taste survive in the world, the quality and design of khadi will continue to improve. It is only the craze for mill-made cloth which impedes its progress. To rid themselves of this craze is the duty of all—Non-co-operators and those who believe in co-operation, the Swarajists and those who

[1] Literally, dew; hence exquisitely delicate

[2] 1848-1909; member of Indian Civil Service, author of *The Economic History of India since the Advent of the East India Company*; President of the Indian National Congress, 1899; later Chief Minister of Baroda State

are not Swarajists, of men and women, the learned and the ignorant.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

70. MY NOTES

Dirty Habits of Passengers

A gentleman who usually travels third on railways, writes to say that travelling by this class becomes intolerable because of the dirty habits of passengers and that, to save oneself the suffering on the journey, one should carry a small broom and a spittoon with a lid. The compartment should be periodically swept with the broom and, whenever anyone wishes to spit, the spittle should be collected in the spittoon. In this way, one would be spared some suffering at any rate.

There is no doubt that such filth is intolerable to anyone who cares for cleanliness. Nevertheless, we cannot choose but travel third class. When I used to travel only third class, I had leaflets printed[1] and had even started distributing them among the travelling public. When the nature of my work changed, I left off this propaganda through leaflets. Later on, I suffered in health, and had to give up both the privilege and the hardships of third-class travel. But its sweet memories are still fresh in my mind and I hope to describe them again some time.

Every volunteer should read out the leaflet as he distributes copies of it. Simultaneously, the experiment of using a broom should also be tried. The suggestion about the spittoon is difficult to carry out. In acting upon it, there is a risk of one's being beaten up and, even so, the passengers may refuse to spit into it. But the use of the broom is very necessary. We may politely request passengers not to throw rubbish in the compartment and, at the same time, ungrudgingly sweep away the dirt which may be thrown despite our pleas. In trying to use the spittoon, there is the danger, while trying to avoid one kind of uncleanliness, of inviting another. It should be properly cleaned after use every time. The spittoon, too, should have no joints, should not corrode and should be large enough in size. On such occasions I used

[1] During 1916-17, these were distributed in Gujarat; *vide* also Vol. XIII, p. 284.

large quantities of paper. By using paper to clean the spot where anyone has spat, one does not soil one's hands and can yet clean the place properly. Later, one can wash the hands, if one feels like doing so. If we do all this, others who are inclined to spit will feel ashamed and restrain themselves. What really makes one sad is that volunteers do not themselves always observe the rules of tidiness and cleanliness. Generally, we seem to have little consideration for others. This is the reason for the excessive filthiness one finds on trains and ships, in fact, wherever one goes. Improvement in this matter can be brought about only if teaching habits of cleanliness and tidiness is part of children's education and if we realize that the rules taught are meant to be followed. Perhaps, the reader does not know that to make railway compartments dirty in the manner described above is an offence under the Railways Act. But no one is prosecuted since the majority of people are guilty of this offence and only a few are innocent. It is a maxim that only a law which the majority obeys can be enforced against a few. In other words, the atmosphere must be favourable if such laws are to be enforced. This further means that, in practice, many laws serve no useful purpose. Once the necessary atmosphere has been created, the minority conforms of its own accord to the general practice.

Meaning of "Popular"

A teacher writes to say:[1]

I have used the word "popular" in my article[2] with the same meaning which this correspondent gives to it. I have expressed my views in keeping with my principles and, consistently with them, we should not have schools in villages which do not favour them. If at all we have them, we should not call them "popular". However, we may rightly feel in our enthusiasm for a new movement that we are justified in starting schools at numerous places and that since society gives us the required money, there is no reason why we should not run them. I would not, however, look upon such activity as altogether unexceptionable. If, having regard to their aims, many of the missionary schools seem to serve no useful purpose, the reason is this. It has also been our experience that funds are misused when collected at one place and spent at another distant place. Moreover, as a result of this, the section of the population on whom we spend the money in this way be-

[1] The letter is not translated here.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 377-9.

comes incapable of helping itself. This is why I would think that we were on the right track to the extent that we proceeded in accordance with the principle I have mentioned. From this point of view, it would seem to be futile to spend money in a village where the parents would neither send their children [to the school] nor contribute funds for it.

But, then, according to this rule, not a single school for untouchables could be started, for our work among them is yet to be considered as "popular"! Moreover, in many villages all the Hindus are opposed to such an activity or, if not actually opposed to it, are indifferent in the matter. This doubt will soon arise. It only shows that no principle is absolute. Very often, many principles have to be followed at the same time, some of which may be contradictory. One may, therefore, say that work which takes into account all the relevant principles yields the best results.

So far as the untouchables are concerned, we have really clipped their wings. We have crushed better sentiments out of them, so that much of our work among them has to be done by way of atonement. It is for us to build schools and temples and dig wells for them. All this is a debt we owe them. Moreover, this obligation may not become "popular". Those to whom it appeals may spend their money on it and work without hoping for reward. In this context, "popularity" must be understood in a different sense. It is only in such perplexing situations that moral dilemmas arise. On such occasions, the test of our good sense consists in reconciling diverse principles and working accordingly.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

71. *DAILY PLYING OF THE SPINNING-WHEEL*

A Jain friend writes to me to say that the women in his family have stopped spinning because some monks have told them that the Jain religion forbids the plying of the spinning-wheel as it kills the invisible germs living in the air! If the song below[1] dates back to 300 years, that itself will answer those monks. Moreover, common sense will not at all accept their argument. There is violence in every deed and in every bodily function. There is violence certainly in eating, drinking and dressing. How, then, can we help taking up

[1] Not translated here. It told the story of a woman who, on her husband's failure to earn enough to maintain his family, brought prosperity to the family with the help of the spinning-wheel.

those activities which are necessary for producing clothing for us? If others draw water, cook, spin and weave and we utilize the fruits of their labour, we naturally share their sin. If, therefore, we ourselves do the three things with our own hands, we can limit their extent and reduce our burden of sins. He who draws water with his own hands will use it economically. But does anyone using tap water exercise any restraint on himself? The same is true of all activities. Personally, I consider spinning to be an activity which serves the cause of non-violence in every respect.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 25-5-1924

72. *MISCELLANEOUS*

A Parsi gentleman from Calcutta writes as follows:[1]

Fortunately, it is not a crore of Gujaratis who use the word *bhaiya*; it is used chiefly by Gujaratis living or settled in Bombay. Hence, it should not be difficult to bring this abuse of the word *bhaiya* to the notice of this small number in order to avoid hurting the feelings of our brothers from the North.

Sale of Khadi

Some facts mentioned by the 'Khadi News Centre' in the sixth number of its leaflet for the second year are worth noting. It appears from these figures that, during the 'Gandhi Month'[2], the sales of khadi in Orissa, by the Bombay Khadi Samiti, in Kerala and in the Marathi region of the Central Provinces have amounted to not less than Rs. 2,60,789. Obviously, this cannot include all private sales. The total sales figures, therefore, would certainly exceed that given above. Moreover, the figures of sales in several other provinces had not been received at the time of the printing of the leaflet. The total sales in the country, therefore, must be much greater. Even so, when the aim is to produce annually khadi of the value of at least sixty crore rupees, of what significance is a total output of four to five lakhs?

[1] The correspondent had referred to Gandhiji's earlier note on the misuse of the word *bhaiya*, literally, brother; *vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 533-4.

[2] Commencing from Gandhiji's birthday which, according to the Indian Calendar, usually falls in the last week of September

EXPORT OF COTTON

The same leaflet informs us that 29,81,361 bales of cotton were exported in 1921-22, and 33,62,601 bales in 1922-23. The larger portion of the sale proceeds of these bales was received by the Indian peasants; even then, not only did they lose the money they could have earned for working on the other processes up to and including the weaving of cloth, though they had time and the necessary skill, but they also sent that amount abroad. In other words, if they earned a rupee for a seer of cotton, perhaps, they paid back fourteen annas when they bought cloth made of the same amount of cotton. Only Indians would do such foolish business.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1924

73. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

JUHU,
Monday [May 26, 1924][1]

CHI. MANI,

So you have reached Ahmedabad earlier than expected. I am keen that you and your brother should live in a separate room in the Ashram. You may have your meals in the mess, or you may cook your food yourself, or with Ba if that suits you. Do as suits you both. You can go to the college from there.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN
C/O VALLABHBHAI, BAR-AT-LAW
AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—Maniben Patelne

[1] As in the printed source

74. *NOTE TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI*[1]

[Before *May 28, 1924*][2]

Very well done, indeed! May you live long, may your virtues grow from day to day, may you always do good deeds, and may you render ever greater service to the country.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 4694. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

75. *LETTER TO V. G. DESAI*

Vaisakha Vad 10 [*May 28, 1924*][3]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have a letter from Abhechandbhai saying that he will most probably get the job he wants. I see that your preface has been dropped from "Rentianu Sangeet" [The Music of the Spinning-wheel]. Now I realize how right you are to insist on proofs. At the same time, I am sorry for poor Swami[4], who is over-burdened with work. At present, even Mahadev is not by his side to help him. But all the same, you should continue to point out the mistakes. In fact, I would like you to send me a list of mistakes every week so that I can print it. If that does not appeal to you, please send it for my personal use. Owing to excitement[5] I had a temperature. What is the Gujarati word for 'excitement' here?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

V. G. DESAI
STERLING CASTLE
SIMLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6009. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] Shantikumar Narottam Morarji, a Gujarati businessman of Bombay connected with the Scindia Steam Navigation Company

[2] The letter bears the addressee's remark that it was written from Juhu. Gandhiji left Juhu for Ahmedabad on May 28, 1924.

[3] *Rentianu Sangeet*, mentioned in the letter, was published in the *Navajivan*, 25-5-24. The correct title of the article is "*Rentlyano Swadhyaya*". In 1924, *Vaisakha Vad* 10 fell on May 28.

[4] Swami Anandanand

[5] The original has this English word.

76. *TELEGRAM TO SARALADEVI CHOWDHARANI*[1]

[Before *May 29, 1924*]

MINORS SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT TAKE PART IN SATYAGRAHA.

The Leader, 31-5-1924

77. *LETTER TO N. M. KHARE*

Saturday [Before *May 29, 1924*][2]

BHAISHRI PANDITJI[3],

I have your letter.

Let Rambhau have a change of climate and recover his health.

It is neither obligatory nor necessary for a woman to remain in isolation during her monthly period. It is quite unnecessary for unmarried girls. It does help to some extent in protecting a woman's health. A married woman especially resorts to isolation in order to save herself from her husband's passion. As to how far it [touching a woman in menses] will affect the [snake-] charm, I am not competent to say. You should observe the rule prescribed by Nathji[4] in this connection. Here, too, harm is likely to result if one has the knowledge that the woman is in menses. I gathered from Kishorelal[5] that the touch of a woman in menses, when you are unaware of her condition, does not affect the charm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 255. Courtesy: Lakshmibai Khare

[1] This was with reference to her reported statement regarding her minor son offering himself as a volunteer in the Tarkeshwar Satyagraha. *Vide* also "Instructions to Secretary", on or after May 23, 1924.

[2] The addressee had taken the snake-charm from Nathji, who was staying in the Ashram in 1924. It is presumed that the letter was written by Gandhiji before he returned to the Ashram from Bombay on May 29, 1924.

[3] Narayan Moreshwar Khare, a music teacher at Sabarmati Ashram; compiled the *Ashram Bhajanavali*, a book of prayers in various languages, for the Ashram.

[4] Kedarnath Kulkarni, spiritual seeker and frequent visitor to the Ashram

[5] Kishorelal Mashruwala

78. *HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION: ITS CAUSE AND CURE*[1]

Hindu Indictment

Pandit Banarsidas Chaturvedi brought a message from a Hindu residing in Tanganyika to the following effect: "Tell Gandhi he is responsible for the Muslim atrocities in Multan."[2] I did not print the message before, as I was not ready to write then upon the question of questions. But many letters have since been received by me, some from well-known friends telling me that I was responsible even for the alleged Moplah atrocities, in fact for all the riots in which Hindus have or are said to have suffered since the Khilafat agitation. The argument is somewhat this: 'You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Mussalmans in the Khilafat question. Your being identified with it gave it an importance it would never have otherwise received. It unified and awakened the Mussalmans. It gave a prestige to the Maulvis which they never had before. And now that the Khilafat question is over, the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of jehad against us Hindus.' I have given the purport of the charge in readable language. Some letters contain unprintable abuse.

So much for the Hindu part of the indictment against me.

Mussalman Indictment

A Mussalman friend says:

> The Muslim community being a very simple and religious community were led to believe that the Khilafat was in danger and that it could be saved by the united voice of Hindus and Mohammedans; these innocent people, believing your very eloquent words, showed great enthusiasm, with the result that they were the first to boycott schools, law-courts, Councils, etc. The most famous institution of Aligarh, which Sir Syed had built by the labour of his lifetime, and which was justly the first institution of its kind, was utterly spoilt. I shall be very much obliged if you will kindly point out that the Hindu community had a similar institution, and it met with the same fate. I know of scores of boys who could have taken the University degree with credit to themselves and the community to which they belonged, but they were induced to leave studies on religious grounds, with the result that they were utterly ruined. On the contrary very few Hindu boys left, and those who did so for the time

[1] A reprint of this article was later issued in the form of a pamphlet.
[2] In March-April 1923

> being instantly joined, as soon as they found that the movement was tottering to pieces. Similar was the case with lawyers. In those days, you brought about a sort of unity between the two communities and advertised it far and near that it was a solid one. The simple-minded Mohammedans again believed it, with the result that they were brutally treated at Ajmer, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra, Saharanpur, Lahore and other places. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was a born journalist of a very high type, and whose wonderful paper *The Comrade* was doing such solid work for the Muslim community, was won over to your side, and he is now a loss to the community. Your Hindu leaders in the guise of *shuddhi* and *sangathan* are trying to weaken the Muslim community. Your short-sighted decision to prevent people from entering the Councils has acted most unfairly on this community as the majority of able men refrain from entering the Councils because of the so-called *fatwa*. Under the circumstances, do you not honestly think that you are doing a great harm to this community by keeping the Mohammedans, a few of them of course, still in your camp.

I have not given the whole of the letter. But the extract represents the gist of the Muslim indictment against me.

Not Guilty

I must plead not guilty to both the charges, and add that I am totally unrepentant. Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation. In spite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is itself a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again. Our wisdom consists now in directing the awakening in the proper channel. What we see before us is sad but not disheartening, if we have faith in ourselves. The storm is but the forerunner of the coming calm that comes from a consciousness of strength, not from the stupor of exhaustion and disappointment.

The public will not expect me to give judgment upon the riots in the different places. I have no desire for giving judgment. And even if I had, I have not the facts before me.

Moplahs

I will say a word as to the causes.

The Malabar happenings undoubtedly disquieted the Hindu mind. What the truth is no one knows. The Hindus say that the Moplah atrocities were indescribable. Dr. Mahmud tells me that these have been grossly exaggerated, that the Moplahs too had a

grievance against the Hindus, and that he could find no cases of forcible conversions. The one case that was reported to him was at least 'non-proven'. In his findings, Dr. Mahmud says, he is supported by Hindu testimony. I merely mention the two versions to ask the public to conclude with me that it is impossible to arrive at the exact truth, and that it is unnecessary for the purpose of regulating our future conduct.

MULTAN, ETC.

In Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmer etc., it is agreed that the Hindus suffered most. In Palwal it is stated that Hindus have prevented Mussalmans from turning a *kachcha* mosque into a *pukka* one. They are said to have pulled down part of the *pukka* wall, driven the Muslims out of the village, and stated that the Muslims could not live in the village unless they promised not to build any mosque and say *azan*. This state of things is said to have continued for over a year. The driven Mussalmans are said to be living in temporary huts near Rohtak.

In Byade in Dharwar district, my informant tells me, on Muslims objecting to music being played before their mosque, the Hindu desecrated the mosque, beat the Mussalmans, and then got them persecuted.

Here again I cite these two instances, not as proved facts, but to show that the Mussalmans too claim to have much to complain of against Hindus.

And it can certainly be fairly added that where they were manifestly weak and Hindus strong, as in Katarpur and Arrah years ago, they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels himself Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such.

THE SEAT OF THE TROUBLE

The seat of the trouble, however, is in the Punjab. The Mussalmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest on Mr. Fazal Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of Government employment to Mussalmans. The letter from which I have already quoted complains bitterly that, wherever a Hindu has been the head of a department, he has carefully excluded Mussalmans from Government posts.

The causes for the tension are thus more than merely religious. The charges I have quoted are individual. But the mass mind is a reflection of individual opinion.

Tired of Non-violence

The immediate cause is the most dangerous. The thinking portion seems to be tired of non-violence. It has not as yet understood my suspension of satyagraha after Ahmedabad and Viramgam tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdyism, and, lastly, after the Chauri Chaura outrage. The last was the last straw. The thinking men imagined that all hope of satyagraha, and therefore of swaraj too in the near future, was at an end. Their faith in non-violence was skin-deep. Two years ago, a Mussalman friend said to me in all sincerity, "I do not believe [in] your non-violence. At least, I would not have my Mussalmans to learn it. Violence is the law of life. I would not have swaraj by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy." This friend is an honest man. I entertain great regard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussalman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man.

Hindu Repugnance

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussalmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible, with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe [in] and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the *Gita* when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the *Gita* under certain circumstances. A very learned Shastri only the other day scornfully rejected my interpretation of the *Gita* and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the *Gita* represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them if we would understand the solution I have to offer. What I see around me today is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness.

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the

whole of the Hindu population. I do, however, suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.

Limited Non-violence

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to re-deliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am then asking my countrymen today to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining swaraj. Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion if Hindus will kill a Mussalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussalman to Hinduism by force. And similarly, what is it but compulsion if Mussalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes. Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not force of arms, but force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms.

Acceptance of non-violence, therefore, for the purposes mentioned by me, is the most natural and the most necessary condition of our national existence. It will teach us to husband our corporate physical strength for a better purpose, instead of dissipating it, as now, in a useless fratricidal strife, in which each party is exhausted after the effort. And every armed rebellion must be an insane act unless it is backed by the nation. But almost any item of non-co-operation fully backed by the nation can achieve the aim without shedding a single drop of blood.

I do not say 'eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India.' But in order that

we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training, not in violence, but in emasculation. My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.

Not Truly Non-violent

If those who believe that we were becoming supine and inert because of the training in non-violence, will but reflect a little, they will discover that we have never been non-violent in the only sense in which the word must be understood. Whilst we have refrained from causing actual physical hurt, we have harboured violence in our breast. If we had honestly regulated our thought and speech in the strictest harmony with our outward act, we would never have experienced the fatigue we are doing. Had we been true to ourselves, we would have by this time evolved matchless strength of purpose and will.

I have dwelt at length upon the mistaken view of non-violence, because I am sure that, if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, whereever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law-courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence; so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

The Bully and the Coward

Unless this elementary condition is recognized, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement. But assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will be common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors. There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out second best. My own

experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward. I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling. Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies. They say that in Saharanpur the Mussalmans looted houses, broke open safes and, in one case, a Hindu woman's modesty was outraged. Whose fault was this? Mussalmans can offer no defence for the execrable conduct, it is true. But I as a Hindu am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice than I am angry at the Mussalman bullying. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions? Where were the relatives of the outraged sister at the time of the outrage? Have they no account to render of themselves? My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull-terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life. Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussalman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at their post. They would have done less well, though still well, if they had stood at their post and returned blow for blow. If the Hindus wish to convert the Mussalman bully into a respecting friend, they have to learn to die in the face of the heaviest odds.

The Way

The way however does not lie through *akhadas*[1] —not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But, if they are meant as a preparation for

[1] Gymnasia

self-defence in the Hindu-Mussalman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure. Mussalmans can play the same game and such preparations secret or open do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers. So long as parents of the middle-class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown-up children in cotton wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even, at times, get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts.

The "Goondas"

It is a mistake to blame the *goondas*[1]. They never do mischief unless we create an atmosphere for them. I was eye witness to what happened in Bombay on the Prince's day in 1921.[2] We sowed the seed and the *goondas* reaped the harvest. Our men were at their back. I have no hesitation in holding the respectable Mussalmans (not all in any single case) responsible for the misdeeds in Multan, Saharanpur and elsewhere, as I have none in holding respectable Hindus responsible for the misdeeds in Katarpur and Arrah. If it is true that at Palwal we have prevented the erection of a *pukka* mosque in the place of a *kachcha* one, it is not the *goondas* who are doing it, it is the respectable Hindus who must be held accountable. We must resolutely discountenance the practice of absolving the respectable class from blame.

Therefore, I hold that Hindus will commit a grave blunder if they organize Hindu *goondas* for defence. From the frying pan they will jump into the fire. The Bania and the Brahmin must learn to defend himself even violently, if not non-violently, or surrender his womenfolk and possessions to the *goondas*. They are a class apart, whether they are labelled Mussalman or Hindu. It was said with gusto that, protected by untouchables (for they feared not death) a Hindu procession (playing triumphant music) quite recently passed a mosque unhurt.

It is a very mundane use to make of a sacred cause. Such exploitation of our untouchable brothers can serve neither Hinduism in general nor the suppressed classes in particular. A few

[1] Hooligans or rowdies

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 462-5.

processions so doubtfully protected may pass a few mosques safely. But it can only aggravate the growing tension, and degrade Hinduism. The middle-class people must be prepared for a beating if they wish to play music in the teeth of opposition, or they must befriend Mussalmans in a self-respecting manner.

The Hindus have to do penance for the past and still continuing disabilities imposed by them upon the suppressed brothers. There can be no question of expecting any return from them for a debt we owe them. If we use them to cover our cowardice, we shall raise in them false hopes we shall never be able to fulfil, and if the retribution comes, it will be a just punishment for our inhuman treatment of them. If I have any influence with Hindus, I would beseech them not to use them as a shield against anticipated Mussalman attack.

Growing Distrust

Another potent cause of the tension is the growing distrust even among the best of us. I have been warned against Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. He is suspected of secret motives. It is said that he is no friend of the Mussalmans. He is even credited with being jealous of my influence. I have the privilege of knowing him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915. I have had the privilege of closest communion with him. I regard him as one of the best among Hindus who, though orthodox, holds most liberal views. He is no enemy of Mussalmans. He is incapable of jealousy of anyone. He has a heart large enough to accommodate even his enemies. He has never aimed at power. And what he has is due to a long period of unbroken service of the motherland, such as very few of us can boast. He and I are temperamentally different, but love each other like brothers. There never has been even so much as a jar between us. Our ways being different, there can be no question of rivalry, therefore, of jealousy either.

Another one distrusted is Lala Lajpat Rai. I have found him to be frank as a child. His record of sacrifice is almost unequalled. I have had not one but many a chat on the Hindu-Muslim question with him. He is no enemy of the Mussalmans. But I confess that he has his doubts about the immediate attainment of unity. He is seeking light from on High. He believes in that unity in spite of himself because, as he told me, he believes in swaraj. He recognizes that without that unity there can be no swaraj. He only does not know how and when it can be attained. He likes my solution, but he doubts if the Hindus will understand and appreciate its nobi-

lity (as he calls it). Let me say in passing I do not call my solution noble. I hold it to be strictly just and the only feasible solution.

Swami Shraddhanandji is also distrusted. His speeches, I know, are often irritating. But even he wants Hindu-Muslim unity. Unfortunately, he believes in the possibility of bringing every Muslim into the Aryan fold, just as perhaps most Mussalmans think that every non-Muslim will some day become a convert to Islam. Shraddhanandji is intrepid and brave. Single-handed he turned a wilderness into a magnificent boarding college on the banks of the sacred Ganges. He has faith in himself and his mission. But he is hasty and easily ruffled. He inherits the traditions of the Arya Samaj. I have profound respect for Dayanand Saraswati[1]. I think that he has rendered great service to Hinduism. His bravery was unquestioned. But he made his Hinduism narrow. I have read *Satyarth Prakash*, the Arya Samaj Bible. Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yeravda Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stand for truth and nothing else. But he has unconsciously misrepresented Jainism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism itself. One having even a cursory acquaintance with these faiths could easily discover the errors into which the great reformer was betrayed. He has tried to make narrow one of the most tolerant and liberal of the faiths on the face of the earth. And an iconoclast though he was, he has succeeded in enthroning idolatry in the subtlest form. For he has idolized the letter of the Vedas and tried to prove the existence in the Vedas of everything known to science. The Arya Samaj flourishes, in my humble opinion, not because of the inherent merit of the teachings of *Satyarth Prakash,* but because of the grand and lofty character of the founder. Wherever you find Arya Samajists, there is life and energy. But, having the narrow outlook and a pugnacious habit, they either quarrel with people of other denominations or failing that, with one another. Shraddhanandji has a fair share of that spirit. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, I do not regard him as past praying for. It is possible that this sketch of the Arya Samaj and the Swamiji will anger them. Needless to say, I mean no offence. I love the Samajists, for I have many co-workers from among them. And I learnt to love the Swamiji, even while I was in South Africa. And though I know him better now, I love him no less. It is my love that has spoken.

[1] 1824-83; founder of the Arya Samaj

The last among the Hindus against whom I have been warned are Jeramdas and Dr. Choithram. I swear by Jeramdas. Truer men I have not had the honour of meeting. His conduct in the jail was the envy of us all. He was true to a fault. He is not anti-Mussalman. Dr. Choithram, though I began to know him earlier, I do not know so well. But from what I do know of him, I decline to think of him as anything but a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have by no means exhausted the list. All I feel is that, if all these Hindus and Samajists have still to be won over to the side of unity, the word unity has no meaning for me. And I should despair of achieving unity in my lifetime.

Bari Saheb

But the suspicion against these friends is not its worst part. I have been warned against Mussalmans just as much as I have been warned against Hindus. Let me take only three names. Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb[1] has been represented to me as an anti-Hindu fanatic. I have been shown some writings of his which I do not understand. I have not even worried him about them. For, he is a simple child of God. I have discovered no guile in him. He often speaks without thinking and often embarrasses his best friends. But he is as quick to apologize as he is ready to say things offensive. He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology. He once flared up at Maulana Mahomed Ali without just cause. I was then his guest. He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mahomed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore. After our departure, he felt he had wronged us. He had certainly wronged Maulana Mahomed Ali, not me. But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit, however, that the Maulana Saheb can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another. There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend with my life, because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.

The Ali Brothers

A similar warning has been given to me about the Ali Brothers. Maulana Shaukat Ali[2] is one of the bravest of men, capable of im-

[1] 1838-1926; nationalist Muslim leader of Lucknow who played an active role in the Khilafat movement

[2] 1873-1938; nationalist Muslim politician; took a leading part in the Khilafat movement

mense sacrifice and equally capable of loving the meanest of God's creatures. He is passionately fond of Islam, but he is no hater of other religions. Mahomed Ali is his brother's *alter ego*. I have not seen such implicit faithfulness to an elder brother as in Maulana Mahomed Ali. He has reasoned out for himself that there is no salvation for India without Hindu-Muslim unity. Their pan-Islamism is not anti-Hindu. Who shall quarrel with their intense desire to see Islam united against attack from without and purified from within? One passage in Maulana Mahomed Ali's Cocanada address was pointed out to me as highly objectionable. I drew his attention to it. He immediately acknowledged that it was an error. Friends have told me there is something to object to even in Maulana Shaukat Ali's address to the Khilafat Conference. I have the address by me, but I have not had time to study it. I know that, if there is anything offensive in it, he is the man the readiest to make amends. The Brothers are not faultless. Being full of faults myself, I have not hesitated to seek and cherish their friendship. If they have some faults, they have many virtues. And I love them in spite of their faults. Just as I cannot forsake the Hindu friends I have mentioned above and effectively work among Hindus for Hindu-Muslim unity, neither can I work to that end among the Mussalmans without the Mussalman friends, such as I have mentioned. If so many of us were perfect beings, there would be no quarrels. Imperfect as we are, we have to discover points of contact and, with faith in God, work away for the common end.

In order to purify the atmosphere of distrust of even the best of us, I had to deal with some of the principal characters. I may not have convinced the reader of the correctness of my estimate. Anyway, it was necessary that he knew mine even if his was different from it.

Illustration from Sind

This intense distrust makes it almost impossible to know the truth. I have received from Dr. Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sind. The man is said to have been done to death by his Mussalman companions because he will not accept Islam. The facts are ghastly if they are true. I straightway wired to Sheth Haji Abdulla Harun inquiring about the matter. He very kindly and promptly wired to say that it was reported to be a case of suicide, but that he was making further inquiries. I hope that we shall succeed in knowing the truth about it. I simply point out the difficulty of work in the midst of suspicion. There is one other Sind incident which I hesitate to report

till I have fuller and more authentic particulars. I simply beseech those who hear about any such incidents, whether against Hindus or Mussalmans, to keep themselves cool and pass on simply facts which can be sustained. I promise on my part to inquire into the most trifling of cases and do whatever is possible for a single individual to do. Before long, I hope, we shall have an army of workers whose one business will be to investigate all such complaints and do whatever is necessary to see that justice is satisfied and cases for future trouble are avoided.

From Bengal

The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting if they are even half true. It is difficult to understand the cause of the eruption of such crimes at the present moment. It is equally difficult to speak with restraint of the cowardice of Hindu protectors of these outraged sisters. Nor is it easy to characterize the lust of those who become so mad with it as to take liberties with innocent women. It is up to the local Mussalmans and the leading Mussalmans in general of Bengal to find out the miscreants, not necessarily with a view to getting them punished, but with a view to preventing a recurrence of such crimes. It is easy enough to dig out a few criminals from their hiding places and hand them over to the police, but it does not protect society against the repetition of them. It is necessary to remove the causes by undertaking a thorough process of reform. There must arise in Islam as well as in Hinduism men who, being comparatively pure in character, would work among such men. Much the same may be said of the Kabuli terror.[1] This has no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim tension. But we have to deal with such cases, too, if we are not to be helplessly relying purely upon the police.

"Shuddhi" and "Tabligh"

That, however, which is keeping up the tension is the manner in which the *shuddhi* or conversion movement is being conducted. In my opinion, there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, I think, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. The modern method does not appeal to me. It has done more harm than good. Though regarded as a matter of the heart purely and one between the Maker and oneself, it has degenerated into an appeal to the selfish instinct. The Arya Samaj preacher is never so happy as when he is reviling other religions.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XX, pp. 155-8.

My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for that must be the implication of *shuddhi* or *tabligh*, when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? "Physician, heal thyself" is more true in matters religious than mundane. But these are my views. If the Arya Samajists think that they have a call from the conscience, they have a perfect right to conduct the movement. Such a burning call recognizes no time limit, no checks of experience. If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or Mussalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked. But no propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions. For that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability. I am told that both Arya Samajists and Mussalmans virtually kidnap women and try to convert them. I have before me volumes of Aga-Khani literature which I have not yet had the time to study carefully, but I am assured that it is a distortion of Hinduism. I have seen enough of it to know that it describes H.H. the Aga Khan as a Hindu avatar. It would be interesting to learn what the Aga Khan himself thinks of all this literature. I have many Khoja friends. I commend this literature to their attention. A gentleman told me that some agents of the Aga-Khani movement lend money to poor illiterate Hindus and then tell them that the debt would be wiped out if the debtor would accept Islam. I would regard this as conversion by unlawful inducements. But the worst form is that preached by a gentleman of Delhi. I have read his pamphlet from cover to cover. It gives detailed instructions to preachers how to carry on propaganda. It starts with a lofty proposition that Islam is merely preaching of the unity of God. This grand truth is to be preached, according to the writer, by every Mussalman irrespective of character. A secret department of spies

is advocated whose one business is to be to pry into the privacy of non-Muslim households. Prostitutes, professional singers, mendicants, Government servants, lawyers, doctors, artisans are pressed into the service. If this kind of propaganda becomes popular, no Hindu household would be safe from the secret attention of disguised misinterpreters (I cannot call them missionaries) of the great message of the Prophet of Islam. I am told by respectable Hindus that this pamphlet is widely read in the Nizam's dominions and that the methods advocated in it are extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions.

As a Hindu I feel sorry that methods of such doubtful morality should have been seriously advocated by a gentleman who is a well-known Urdu author and has a large circle of readers. My Mussalman friends tell me that no respectable Mussalman approves of the methods advocated. The point, however, is not what the respectable Mussalmans think. The point is whether a considerable number of Mussalman masses accept and follow them. A portion of the Punjab Press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy. I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindu and Mussalman writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading-rooms.

I have heard it said that the Government emissaries are at the back of this campaign of calumny. I hesitate to believe it. But even assuming the truth of it, the public of the Punjab should be able to cope with the growing disgrace.

I think I have now examined all the causes, both original and continuing, of the tension between the two communities. It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

Cow-slaughter

The first is cow-slaughter. Though I regard cow-protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Mussalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Mussalmans and resulted in more slaughter. I am satisfied that, during 1921

more cows were saved through the voluntary and generous effort of the Mussalmans than through the Hindu effort during all the previous twenty years (say). Cow-protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world, perhaps, are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron point of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle is a disgrace to us. The cows find their neck under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow-protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *pinjrapoles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow-slaughter at the hands of Mussalmans, and they do sin grievously when, in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Mussalmans.

Music

The question of music before mosques and, now, even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Mussalmans as cow-slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as Hindus cannot compel Mussalmans to refrain from killing cows, so can Mussalmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Mussalman neighbour, and wherever they can, accommodate him. I have heard that, in some places, Hindus purposely, and with the deliberate intention of irritating Mussalmans, perform *arati* just when the Mussalman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Mussalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimise and, if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

Pact

In view of what I have said above, it is clear that we have not even arrived at the stage when a pact is even a possibility.

There can be, it is clear to me, no question of bargain about cow-slaughter and music. On either side it must be a voluntary effort and, therefore, can never be the basis of a pact.

For political matters, a pact or an understanding is certainly necessary. But, in my opinion, the restoration of friendly feeling is a condition precedent to any effectual pact. Are both parties sincerely willing to accept the proposition that no disputes, religious or otherwise, between the communities should ever be decided by an appeal to force, i.e., violence? I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

So far as the political matters are concerned, as a non-co-operator I am quite uninterested in them; but, for the future understanding, I hold that it is up to the Hindus as the major party not to bargain, but leave the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and abide by his decision. I would similarly deal with the Sikhs, the Christians and the Parsis and be satisfied with the residue. It is, in my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution. Hindus, if they want unity among different races, must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must have a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of satyagraha, we should know that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Mussalman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good, whether he be a Hindu or a Mussalman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must, therefore, make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their *bona fides*. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But, if we want five engineers, we must not take one from each community, but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Mussalmans or all Parsis. The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But, distri-

bution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the Government of the country can only do so if they pass the required test.

Trust Begets Trust

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Mussalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart unity between Hindus and Mussalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both, and because I believe in human nature. Mussalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a "bad lot". I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Mussalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus, living as they do in glass houses, have no right to throw stones at their Mussalman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes! If 'Kaffir' is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is *Chandal*? In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes. The pity of it is that the treatment still continues. What a fight in Vaikom for a most elementary human right![1] God does not punish directly; His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness, a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, all will be well.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 272-3.

The readers of *Young India* will pardon me for devoting practically the whole of *Young India* to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity. He will readily do so if he holds with me that there is no question more important and more pressing than this. In my opinion, it blocks all progress. I therefore invite the reader to peruse the statement most carefully and favour me with views or information (not necessarily for publication) that may throw additional light on the question or correct any errors of fact or opinion.

Young India, 29-5-1924

79. CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

As I have said in my statement to the Press[1] on the question of Council-entry, it is not complete without an examination, in the light of my views, of the working of the Congress organization. The difference between the Swarajists and myself is honest and vital. I believe that the frank recognition of honest differences will accelerate the country's progress, as a patched-up compromise designed to hide differences would have retarded it. Each party is now free to give the fullest play to its views unhampered by any consideration save that of common cause.

It is, therefore, necessary to consider the way the Congress organization is to be worked. It is clear to me that it cannot be jointly worked just as a government cannot be jointly and efficiently carried on by two parties with opposite views. I hold the boycott of titles, etc., to be an absolutely integral part of the Congress programme. The boycott has two objects: first, to persuade those who hold titles etc., to give them up; secondly, to keep the Congress pure from the influence of the institutions boycotted. If the first had been immediately successful, we should have attained our goal at once. But the second is equally necessary, if we are ever to reach our goal through the programme of non-violent non-co-operation. For me the boycott is national so long as the National Congress enforces it in its own organization. It cannot undermine the influence, the glamour and the prestige of Government institutions, if it cannot be run without the presence in it, as administrators, of title-holders, lawyers, schoolmasters and councillors who represent, as it were, the voluntary branch of the Government administration. The idea running behind the programme of non-co-operation was

[1] *Vide* "Statement to Associated Press of India", 22-5-1924.

that if we could honestly, non-violently and successfully work the Congress organization without such influence, and, nay, even in spite of it, that fact by itself would be enough to give us swaraj. Our numerical superiority is so great that an effective boycott carried out by the national organization must make the Congress an irresistible power. It follows, therefore, that the executive organization of the Congress must not contain titled persons, Government schoolmasters, practising lawyers and members of legislative bodies and persons who use foreign cloth or cloth manufactured even in our mills, and those who deal in such cloth. Such persons can become Congressmen, but cannot and should not become members of executive organizations. They can become delegates and influence the Congress resolutions, but once the Congress policy is fixed, those who do not believe in that policy, in my opinion, should stand out of the executive bodies. The All-India Congress Committee and all the local executive committees are such bodies, and they should contain only those members who whole-heartedly believe in and are prepared to carry out the policy. I am the author of the introduction into the Congress organization of the system of single transferable votes. But experience has shown that, so far as the executive organizations are concerned, it cannot work. The idea that all opinions should be represented on these bodies must be abandoned if the executive committees are to become bodies for the purpose of carrying out the Congress policy for the time being.

One of the most important reasons why we have not been wholly successful is that the members of these executive bodies have not believed even in the Congress creed. I stand where I did when I wrote my impressions of the All-India Congress Committee, which met at Delhi soon after the Bardoli resolutions were passed by the Working Committee.[1] I saw then as clearly as possible that many members, if not indeed the majority, did not believe in non-violence and truth as an integral part of the Congress creed. They would not allow that 'peaceful' meant 'non-violent' and that 'legitimate' meant 'truthful'. I know that today there is more of the violent and the untruthful spirit in us than we had in February 1922. I would, therefore, urge that those who do not believe in the five boycotts and non-violence and truthfulness should resign from the Congress executive bodies. This is why I have said in my statement on the Council-entry that the constructive programme should

[1] For the Bardoli resolutions of February 12, the A. I. C. C. resolution of February 25, and Gandhiji's comments, *vide* Vol. XXII, pp. 376-81, 468-9 & 500-4.

be worked by different parties through their respective organizations. The thorough believers, if there are any, in the five boycotts and non-violence and truth, have no organization other than the Congress. The most natural thing, in my opinion, therefore, is for the Swarajists to work the constructive programme through their own organizations. So far as I can see, their method of working must be different from that of the boycotters. If they are to make the Council-entry successful, they must devote the whole of their energy to that purpose, and, therefore, they can help the constructive programme by working it mainly through the Councils and the Assembly.

I for one can be no party to a tug of war in which each party tries to capture the Congress executive. That war may be fought out if at all necessary without heat and bitterness at the forthcoming session in December. The Congress is the debating and legislative body. The permanent organizations are purely executive bodies to give effect to the resolutions of the Congress. I am in a desperate hurry. I believe implicitly in the full and undiluted non-violent non-co-operation programme as passed by the Congress and no other. If I can get really non-violent and truthful workers who share my belief in the boycotts, in the potency of khaddar, in Hindu-Muslim unity and in removal of untouchability, I would again feel swaraj coming to us much quicker than most of us think possible. But if we wrangle on in the All-India Congress Committee, we can only discredit and obstruct one another. Each party honourably and without jealousy and ill will working separately (because they cannot do otherwise) can help one another.

I trust that all the members of the All-India Congress Committee will attend the forthcoming meeting. If we can discuss the plan of action in a calm manner without imputing motives and make the composition of the All-India Congress Committee homogeneous, we can do a tremendous amount of work during the forthcoming six months. I would respectfully invite each member to consider for himself or herself where he or she is in respect of the programme. If they do not believe in the programme as it is and in its capacity unaided to secure swaraj, and if they really voice the feelings of their electors, I would not hesitate to advise the Committee even to take the risk of revising and radically altering the programme in anticipation of endorsement next year. No doubt for such a drastic change there must be a clearly made-out case, there must be real public opinion behind it. Granted these two conditions, I have no doubt that, in spite of anything to the contrary in the constitution,

it is the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to reverse the Congress policy at the risk of incurring condemnation and show useful and substantial work at the end of the year. Stagnation must be avoided at all cost.

After I had finished the foregoing, it was pointed out to me that it was possible that my views might tend to make Swarajists appear weaker than or inferior to the No-changers in the estimation of the massses. Nothing can be further from my thought than any such idea. There is no question of quality. It is purely a question of temperamental differences. I have written simply with an eye to effective working of the Congress executives. That working is possible only if the executives are run only by one party. If the Swarajists' view is more popular, the executive bodies should be solely in their hands. The Congress must always represent the popular view whatever it may be, whether good or bad. And it is the duty of those who hold contrary views, not necessarily weak or inferior, to stand out and work on the popular mind from outside. The No-changers will be belying their trust if they regard Pro-changers as in any way inferior to them by reason of their holding different views.

It has been further pointed out to me that, in arguing for exclusive control of the executives, I am departing from the spirit, if not the letter, of the Delhi resolution reaffirmed at Cocanada. I have read both the resolutions carefully. In my opinion, the Delhi resolution and, more specially the Cocanada resolution, does not contemplate joint control of the executives. The Cocanada resolution is not a mere reaffirmation, but it emphasizes the principle of non-violent non-co-operation. But even if my reading of the resolutions is incorrect, my argument remains unimpaired. Mine is only an opinion to be accepted or rejected by the members of the A.I.C.C. And it is actuated by the sole consideration of expeditious working. I feel that both the parties can effectively help each other only if they work separately.

Young India, 29-5-1924

80. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

[After *May 29, 1924*][1]

CHI. MANI,

Wasn't it nice of you to have come yesterday and gone away?[2] And now you send me a message! A patient has the right to change her mind as often as she pleases; she cannot be bound by any promises. So you are free not to come. And you are also free to come if you feel like it. I only want you to get well somehow or other.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN PATEL
KHAMASA CHOWKI
AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–Manibehn Patelne, p. 20

81. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

ASHRAM,
Friday [*May 30, 1924*][3]

MY DEAR OLD YOUNG MAN,

It is a wonderful thing you are doing. I receive letters from you. Whenever anyone from your family meets me, my eyes are filled with tears of joy. Whatever expectations I have of you you fulfil. When I have no expectation, you do something which, you think, would please me. I only made a joke; but you presented me with a beautiful Gujarati letter. How can I desist from sharing it with the readers of *Navajivan*? Get somebody to read *Navajivan* to you.

[1] The letter seems to have been written from Sabarmati Ashram which Gandhiji reached on May 29, 1924.

[2] The addressee had come and gone away without seeing Gandhiji as he was asleep at the time.

[3] The article on the addressee was published in *Navajivan*, under the sub-heading 'Old Young Man' in "My Notes", 1-6-1924. The Friday preceding that date fell on May 30.

The invitations for Amina's[1] marriage have been despatched by many hands. I first put your name on the list and then struck it off. If the invitation were sent to you, it would only mean that some money was expected from you. I did send invitations to a few Gujarati [Hindus] just to show how the daughter of a Mussalman was also my own. But I do not expect even their presence at the marriage ceremony. Certainly, no money can be accepted from them. I have incurred some expenditure because I have to give with my own hand Amina, the daughter of a Mussalman, in marriage and because Imam Saheb would also wish it. I would not incur any expenditure if a Hindu girl was to be given in marriage by me. I sent you the invitation for you to see.

Mrs. Abbas, Rehana and others see me quite often.

If you find it difficult to read my handwriting or to write Gujarati, you may write, and ask me also to write, in English.

I wouldn't destroy the very roots of a tree which bears sweet fruit.

Your brother,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

I shall tell Imam Saheb about your letter. As for sending money, please don't.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 9546

82. *INTERVIEW TO "SWATANTRYA"*[2]

[SABARMATI,
May 30, 1924]

Q. Mahatmaji, did you agree with Dr. Mahmud's statement which you have published in the *Young India* article to the effect that not a single case has been proved wherein Hindus have been forcibly converted by Moplahs, as can be conclusively seen from Hindu evidence itself?

A. I wish you had read my article rather carefully. I have simply given Dr. Mahmud's view and not my own.

[1] Daughter of Imam Saheb Bawazeer, who was married on May 31, 1924

[2] The special correspondent of *Swatantrya*, a Hindi daily of Nagpur, had an interview with Gandhiji at Sabarmati Ashram on May 30 and June 3 to ascertain his views on the Hindu-Muslim question and the general political situation. The composite report has been split up and presented here in chronological sequence.

Q. That is why I am asking your opinion. When you have thought it fit to publish Dr. Mahmud's view, why did you not publish the views of Dr. Moonje and Deodhar of the Servants of India Society at the same time?

A. I don't know what Dr. Moonje has written about Malabar. Dr. Mahmud personally assured me that his view has been supported by Hindus in Malabar. How is it that you found only this remarkable omission in my article? My comments that every Mohammedan is by nature a vagabond and that sometimes Maulana Bari Saheb may become a dreadful friend are bound to create a sensation among the people. The same is the case with the Arya Samaj. I have read the *Satyarth Prakash* thrice but was sorely disappointed.

Q. I am afraid I have to talk to you, Mahatmaji, on other topics as well. But I shall do that some other time.[1]

A. Certainly, I want you to speak out plainly whatever is troubling your heart without reservation. I must write what I consider right. You are anxiously waiting for the grant of provincial autonomy. But I want more than that. The Government will give up its attitude of indifference towards me and become terrified if I were to undertake an all-India tour for six months in connection with this Hindu-Muslim question.

The Hindu, 12-6-1924

83. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[*May 31, 1924*][2]

I have your letter. I hope your sister is now all right. I revised the translation of "*Brahmacharya*"[3] in the train itself. There was not a single mistake. However, I have made changes in some places. I have decided to print it. The article about Visnagar is still there. I intend revising that also. Did I have any difficulty in waking up?[4] Here I am enjoying pretty good quiet. I observe silence till 1 p.m. and so can dispose of a good deal of work.

[1] *Vide* "Interview to *Swatantrya*", 3-6-1924.

[2] The postmark carries this date.

[3] For the text of the article, *vide* pp. 116-9.

[4] It seems the addressee went to the railway station to see Gandhiji when the latter travelled from Bombay to Ahmedabad on the night of May 28.

have yet to write for *Navajivan*. I have not even touched it. I begin my silence between six and seven in the morning.

Narahari came here yesterday.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
Saturday

I got your second letter just now. Bachu may be saved if she is bathed in water with potassium permanganate. Smallpox is curable no doubt. But about your thoughts after you left. . . .[1]

BHAISHRI MAHADEV DESAI
C/O STATION MASTER, BULSAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8844

84. *INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA*

AHMEDABAD,
May 31, 1924

Questioned if, in view of his article in the *Young India* on the Congress organization,[2] a split in the Congress was not a certainty, Mr. Gandhi replied:

It all depends on what you mean by split. If you mean parties, yes. Both parties came into being at the Gaya Congress. The House of Commons contains many parties, but you do not call their existence a split in the English nation. Congress will now contain two parties, but will have no split, I hope. Just as the popular party in the House of Commons is always in power, so should the most popular Congress party be in power in the national organization. Just as Liberals do not and dare not regard Conservatives or Labourites as their inferiors, so may the No-changers and *vice versa*. My suggestion attempts at least to avoid a split and provides the most favourable atmosphere for efficiency, even if it does not ensure it. I do not believe in coalition government at any time, but certainly not when there are vital differences of opinion or, if you will, different mentalities, making for different and diametrically opposite courses of action.

[1] The sentence abruptly ends here.
[2] *Vide* "Congress Organization", 29-5-1924.

Asked what he thought would be its effect upon the Government and whether it was likely to destroy all chances of expected advance in Reforms, Mr. Gandhi said:

I do not think it will. I know it has been suggested that the Government would have trembled if I had made common cause with the Pro-changers. I hold a totally opposite view. Those who are responsible for the conduct of the Government of India are not fools. They are clever and wide awake. They know that all real pressure that is exerted upon them is from No-changers, because they dread civil disobedience. The organization for civil disobedience is possible only by those who devote their whole time and attention to it. The Government will certainly chuckle if the No-changers and Pro-changers obstruct one another. I shall be no party to any such thing and I do not think the two parties will [be] either. They both want swaraj and that at the earliest possible moment. Each will, therefore, in its own way work for it. The Non-co-operators gave Liberals, whether they admit the fact or not, prestige with the Government. The pressure in the country, outside the Councils, of a forward party must always help reformers. I make bold to say that, if the complete-boycotters died out, the Councilwallahs will have a bad time in the Council, always assuming that violence will never be popular in the country. All autocratic governments must dread the rise of popular power, especially when it is disciplined and peaceful. The present Government dreads the incoming Hindu-Muslim unity, and if the khaddar programme ever becomes successful, as it must, it will confound them the most. It will convert the Government to the popular view and bring about the most peaceful revolution the world has ever seen.

The Hindu, 2-6-1924

85. *HINDUS AND MUSLIMS OF VISNAGAR*

I have received a whole heap of letters on this subject. The fact that the correspondents themselves do not expect these letters to be published proves their generosity, and also their approval of the policy I have adopted in running *Navajivan*. I would certainly not publish letters attacking anyone. I would also not publish anything which would create bitterness between the two communities. I could not set down even a single word in hatred. If I wrote about the communal disharmony in Visnagar, it was only to try and pacify the two communities and to point out to them what their dharma towards each other should be.

If we look at the matter from this point of view, it is not at all necessary to publish any of the letters which I have received. I had one from Shri Mahasukhbhai many days ago and did not publish it, as I did not like to do so. However, I had agreed to publish it if there was the slightest feeling that I had been unjust intentionally or otherwise. Meanwhile, I find from other letters and from replies to Shri Mahasukhbhai's letter which I have received that the letter in question has been published in other newspapers. This being so, it is not necessary to publish it here even in order to be fair to him.

To do justice to the correspondent who had informed me, I should mention that it was I who used the word "beast" instead of "cows and bulls". The correspondent himself had used these words. Thinking that there might be some exaggeration, I used the more general term instead of a more specific word. The latter was not necessary for my argument.

From other letters which I have received, I find that Shri Mahasukhbhai is on good terms with the Muslims. Let us all hope that utilizing that friendly relation, he will bring about harmony between the two communities and end the discord in Visnagar. I have, before me, letters by "white-capped gentry" in which they defend themselves. I also have letters accusing them. The "white-capped gentry" or others who have done nothing wrong have no need to defend themselves. One's actions are one's defence. Anyone whose actions are blameless puts up with accusations, as he has faith in the truth that the light shed by good actions cannot be hidden for long by the cloud of accusations. Hence the "white-capped gentry" should have no fear if they have indeed done noth-

ing unworthy; if, however, they have done some wrong thing, they should frankly admit the fact and, by way of atonement, refrain from acting in such manner in future. I have never believed that all who wear white caps are good men. Moreover, people have not yet come to love khadi well enough. When the use of khadi becomes universal and people using mill-made cloth are a rare sight, both the millionaire and the thief will be in white caps. Eating, drinking and wearing clothes are common to both the saint and the sinner. It is desirable, therefore, that those who wear white caps and society in general stop believing that the former have a monopoly of virtue.

A translation of my article in *Young India*[1] about Hindus and Muslims has already been published in *Navajivan*. I request every Hindu and Muslim who desires harmony to read it carefully. Among the letters referred to above, there is one from a Muslim friend. It is possible that he too wrote it with the intention of getting it published in all papers. Whether it is published or not, I confess that I find no evidence of objectivity in it. I do not believe that the letters I have received from Hindus contain perfect truth. This Muslim brother, however, claims to be objective and says that he has investigated the matter and presented only what he thought was the truth. But either he is very credulous or the Muslims of Visnagar have been able to hide the truth completely from him. So long as it remains our nature to try to pass ourselves off as innocent even when we are guilty, the evil in us will never leave. The attempt to conceal our guilt suggests a desire to cling to our evil. There can be no true understanding in such circumstances. Anyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, who tries to shield his guilt, brings shame upon his religion. A religious person very frankly admits his fault and this is what pleases God, by whatever name you know Him. It should be our general way to make much of our own faults and overlook those of others. This is nobility. But these days we behave in the opposite way. We magnify to the size of an elephant another's fault which is as tiny as a speck of dust, while our own fault, as big as an elephant, seems so tiny that we need a magnifying glass to see it.

I do not wish to say anything here just now to the Hindus and Muslims of Visnagar, but they must know that I have not for a moment stopped thinking about the disputes between them. At present, I am not in a position to undertake a journey. I shall, however, certainly try to send over someone else. Maulana Mahomed

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 528-33.

Ali has told me that the Hindus and Muslims of Baroda State know him well and that he is confident he can settle the dispute by himself. If, therefore, I find it necessary, I shall most certainly request him to go. But I hope that the Hindus and Muslims of Visnagar will make a sincere attempt and settle their disputes, that by making it unnecessary for any outsider to go there, they will set an example to other places where there are similar disputes. Such perfect conditions should prevail in the country—and they will prevail—that a weak Hindu will be protected by Muslims and a weak Muslim by Hindus.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-6-1924

86. MY NOTES

Young Old Man

The reader will be glad to know that Abbas Saheb is not the person to remain unmoved by my pleasant digs at him. All Gujaratis know that he knows Gujarati. He has now started writing letters to me in Gujarati. I give below a specimen of his writing.[1]

I have put his Gujarati before readers without any corrections. The reader knows that I myself commit many mistakes. "Summit-dweller" points out that I commit them still. I feel ashamed when I see some of them. However, as I myself commit plenty of mistakes, Abbas Saheb's Gujarati, full of mistakes as it is, is very much dearer to me than his faultless English. Just as I do not intend to give up writing in Gujarati because of my mistakes, similarly, Abbas Saheb may, if he wishes, learn to avoid the mistakes which he makes, but should continue to write in Gujarati and so awaken in other Gujaratis pride in their own language. The word *pustak*[2] used by him sounds very sweet to me. However, even if he does not read other Gujarati books, we hope that henceforth he will certainly read *Navajivan*. I intend to publish in *Navajivan* in a few days the list of my mistakes prepared by that "Summit-dweller", mistakes which make me feel ashamed of myself, and then Abbas Saheb will have no reason to feel ashamed of his mistakes. He will, moreover, read *Navajivan*, correcting my mistakes as he

[1] The passage is not translated here.
[2] Book

reads on, and so will learn to write relatively correct Gujarati. The persons who attend on Abbas Saheb should persuade him to let them read out *Navajivan* to him.

He has also mentioned another thing which should be a source of inspiration to Gujaratis and to all Indians. "Dear Sir, you have spread my fame throughout India as an 'old man'. I look upon myself as a 'young man'." This old man will not concede that he is old even if he is given a mirror to look into, for he is young at heart. Those who accompany him in his wanderings have told me that, though they get tired, old Abbas Saheb does not! A person who can work harder than a young man is young indeed, though he may be advanced in years. If a young man who does not have a single grey hair nor one loose tooth keeps idle and does not serve the country, he is certainly an old man. We should hope that India will have many young old men like Abbas Saheb.

"There Is No Enthusiasm"

Under this heading, Shri Mohanlal Pandya has written the following letter[1] to admit his error[2]:

Anna's heart will certainly be gladdened on reading this letter, and we should also hope that people will start using the national language, as far as possible, when conducting the affairs of the nation. Let me point out an easy method for the student of Hindi. If possible, he should go through a simple book on grammar. I think a "Hindi-Gujarati Teacher" is now available. If this is so, a copy should be bought. He should also read *Hindi Navajivan*. If anyone sees in this recommendation of mine the partiality of an editor, let him read some other Hindi paper. Thirdly, he should read an annotated edition of Tulsi *Ramayana*. Anyone would be a gainer by reading the *Ramayana* even for the hundredth time. The commentary is mostly in simple Hindi. There will be no difficulty whatsoever if one reads nothing besides this. One need not worry if one makes mistakes while speaking Hindi. Making them, one learns to correct them. The advice not to worry about mistakes is not intended for the idle but for workers like me, who are diligent in learning the language. In speaking Hindi, one should use very few Sanskrit words; one should, instead, use a mixture of simple Hindi words and simple Urdu ones so that the language would be under-

[1] The letter is not translated here.

[2] In sending Harihar Sharma, who was known as Anna, an invitation in English

stood by both Hindus and Muslims. I describe the language resulting from such impartial mixing of words as Hindustani.

Shri Mohanlal Pandya, while atoning for his error, has taken upon himself to atone for other things too. Sometimes, my articles may be found to contain expressions of despair. These, however, are intended to create hope for better things. A labourer or worker ("a servant of India" is too big an expression; while commenting on Shri Mohanlal's letter, the pen automatically writes the words "labourer" and "worker") should not worry about others. We need not be judges of the whole world. We should not even think of others around us doing nothing. To become enthusiastic means to be filled with steam. Just as, by filling an engine with steam and then letting it off or stopping it as one may desire, we can control the speed of a train, similarly, if we can preserve this steam generated in this bodily machine of ours and then use it when occasion requires, we can speed fast with the burden that may have fallen to our share. If we but go on working to the best of our own capacity, without shirking or delaying the smallest task, we would follow the example of Janaka[1], who said about Mithila[2] that he cared little whether it was consumed by fire or remained safe. If every worker of Gujarat goes on with the tasks in his chosen field, with his eyes closed, swaraj will be at our doorstep. No Mama, Anna, Kaka or any such other "relations", old or young, will then be able to criticize him. Likewise, Shri Laxmidas[3] will have nothing to say against the man or woman who spends all his or her spare time in working on the spinning-wheel and producing uniform—neither too thick nor too thin—well-twisted yarn; he will actually bow to him or her. Yarn is the life-thread of the country. "God holds me with a slender thread and I turn in whichever direction He pulls me." Mira[4] knew this thread because she was filled with love. If she had not been a skilled spinner, how could she have given the beautiful simile of a thread to the bond of love uniting her with Lord Krishna! The Goddess, Mother India, wishes to tie us with that same thread and free us from slavery.

Mill-made Khadi

A large number of men and children came to see me on Thursday. As usual, I jokingly asked those whom I saw dressed

[1] Philosopher king of Videha
[2] Capital of Videha
[3] Laxmidas Asar, a follower of Gandhiji
[4] Mirabai, medieval saint-poetess of Rajasthan

in mill-made cloth, why they did not wear khadi. The reply was, "Aren't we dressed in khadi?" I felt abashed. I looked more closely. My doubt increased. I then felt the garment with my hands and said that the cloth was not khadi. Their reply was, that it certainly was khadi, mill-made khadi. I became serious. I realized the difficulties which still stand in the way of popularizing khadi. I told these friends that by khadi was meant hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, and that there could be no such thing as mill-made khadi. These gentlemen confessed their ignorance and vowed that thenceforth they would exclusively use khadi, i.e., cloth woven by hand from hand-spun yarn.

On the same day, some Punjabi friends came to see me. I saw that they had a length of jean cloth with them. I asked them what it was. They handed over the cloth to me. I saw on it the words "Swadeshi Cloth Mark" stamped in sky blue. On further inquiry, I was told that large quantities of such material were being sold as khadi. How are we to deal with such fraudulent practices? This is a difficult problem and cannot be discussed just now. Here it may only be suggested that leaflets explaining what is meant by khadi should be brought out and distributed everywhere. Volunteers should very politely put this leaflet into the hands of all persons who are not clad in khadi. Description of khadi should be written out on large wooden boards and big leaders, not hired men, should parade the streets wearing these. When I am in a position to undertake tours, I shall be ready to enlist my name among such workers. While I remain in Ahmedabad, I am ready to move every day for one hour in the city market carrying such boards. It will be two months before I can do this. Meanwhile, the practice can be started right now. I give here a draft of the legend. Anyone with more experience in propaganda work is welcome to make improvements in it.

Brothers and Sisters, Beware!

> By khadi is meant cloth woven by hand from hand-spun yarn. Some merchants pass off as mill-khadi or swadeshi khadi cloth made from mill-spun yarn. Such cloth does not serve our purpose. Those who really wish to see that the poor do not starve should wear nothing but genuine khadi.

Such or similar posters can also be stuck on walls. What the Municipality here can do in this matter, it is for Vallabhbhai to decide.

Satyagraha in Kenya

A correspondent from Mombasa writes as follows:[1]

This last statement cannot be correct. If everyone is imprisoned, the authorities are bound to feed them. However, persons in police custody are free to get food from outside. The statement above can only mean that the satyagrahis in Kenya have been getting food from outside under this rule.

When we read about these persons who have been imprisoned, we realize how far we have progressed. Ten years ago, we used to get excited when we received news of our countrymen having been imprisoned in this manner; today we do not think about these prisoners as we have become accustomed to jail hardships. We have realized that there can be no happiness without voluntary suffering. So far as the satyagrahis of Kenya are concerned, I regard their imprisonment as a training in suffering. There is little possibility of their hardships ending merely through their imprisonment. They will have to undergo more suffering than this, or wait till India has won swaraj. There is no need to despair so long as they have spirit enough to offer satyagraha. Should it take long for them to reach the goal, they should conclude that their satyagraha is half-hearted. If they are strong enough, there are many other laws, besides that imposing the poll-tax, which they can decide to break in a peaceful manner. Is there any man-made law which a person is bound to obey when he is denied the right to own land, to live with self-respect and to vote? Where the aim of the government is to hold down the whole society or a section of it, is that society or that section bound to obey any law promulgated by it? When the purpose behind a law is to stop the progress of society, it becomes the latter's duty to violate man-made law. Hence, no external power can restrain the Indians of Kenya. They can free themselves from their bonds any time they wish to do so. I assume that no Indian in Kenya who happens to read this article will take any hasty step. Not everyone gets the right to offer civil disobedience. He alone who has always obeyed the laws of his own free will can deliberately violate a law when the occasion demands that. This weapon, when employed by one who does not know how to use it, can harm that very person.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-6-1924

[1] The letter is not translated here.

87. INJUSTICE TO KATHIAWARIS

Rebuking me gently, a friend has remarked that these days I have been doing an injustice to Kathiawaris: I always describe them as men given to too much talking. This friend believes that my articles suggest that there is none among them who really works. He goes on to say that others, following me, form the same opinion about Kathiawaris and malign them with similar epithets. The result will be, he says, that Kathiawaris themselves will come to believe that they are what they are described to be and then even those few among them who now work will stop working.

My criticism was not directed against all Kathiawaris. It was aimed only at politicians. I did not mean to suggest,either, that all of them are men of too many words.

I myself was born in a family of politicians, but I certainly do not regard myself as given to talking too much. Hence, first of all, I myself am excluded from my criticism. Moreover, some of my co-workers are Kathiawaris and they go on working silently all the time. My description does not apply to them either. It was, thus, aimed only at those to whom it could be applied.

It is true, nevertheless, that my criticism would be unjust if the talkers had been so few as to be mere exceptions. It is really my complaint that, by and large, the politicians are given to talking too much and to intrigues. Silent workers are the exception. I grew up in a family of politicians and I have had plenty of experience of this class. I worshipped my father and my devotion to my parents equalled that of Shravana[1]. If this is an exaggeration, at any rate I have no doubt in my mind that Shravana was my ideal. But I never lost my better judgment. Hence, I knew then, and know better now, that much of my father's time was taken up in mere intrigues. Discussions started early in the morning and went on till it was time to leave for the office. Everyone talked in whispers. The discussions centred on how to rise to a job of higher status and authority than the present one and how to increase the influence of the Banias as against that of the party of *Nagars*[2] and Brahmins; even amongst the Banias, my father's aim was to see our

[1] A youth, in the *Ramayana*, who was devoted to his aged parents and carried them on his shoulders to various places of pilgrimage

[2] A Hindu community

own family rise above others. This, then, is one side of the picture. I do not wish to suggest that service of others was never a motive. It was, however, always a subsidiary motive, helping others as well as one may while pursuing one's own interests. My father was not the lowest of the low among politicians; he was, on the contrary, considered to be the very best among them. He was noted for his honesty. Bribes were accepted then too, but he was free from this evil. He was large-hearted and his generosity had no limits. Even such a good person had not remained unaffected by the poisonous atmosphere of politics.

The knowledge of these facts often prompts me to say that, by being on terms of purest friendship with *Nagars* and others, I am doing atonement for the favouritism practised by my family, that, brought up among politicians and diplomats, I am atoning for their sin of clever talking by having chosen not to follow their practice and accepted the philosophy of action.

What was true of politicians forty or fifty years ago is true even today. Their sole occupation is scheming. My dislike of this was one of the reasons for my leaving the country. To go on working silently in an atmosphere of politics would mean stagnating for ever as a clerk. Every clerk, however, aspires to a position of authority, but such a position is the reward of successful scheming and not of work. And so on the very day a person enters the service of an Indian State his training in scheming begins.

A new atmosphere is now growing among us. Thanks to our desire to give up clever talking and the methods of scheming, we now get some active Kathiawari workers even in the prevailing unfavourable atmosphere. The ordinary politicians, however, are still slaves of the atmosphere in which they live.

My aim in writing about this was, and is today, to help the politicians in Kathiawar to understand the situation and change it immediately.

Such criticism of Kathiawaris, that is, of that section of the politicians to which it applies—is a part of satyagrahi abuses. Hence, only one like me can offer it. Those who dislike Kathiawaris are not entitled to offer it. What does it matter, however, if any such persons follow my example and make this criticism? One who does not scheme will remain unaffected and smile at the criticism. A person who schemes and is clever of tongue, why should he get angry when told the truth? A friend does not observe as many shortcomings in us as an enemy does. To be able to see the defects of a friend and yet love him with one's whole heart is a particular virtue in satyagraha and one which is extremely difficult to acquire. We can,

therefore, say in a general way that we cannot learn about our shortcomings through our friends to the same extent that we can through our enemies. I would, therefore, request Kathiawaris to listen courteously and respectfully to the criticism made by enemies, to reflect upon it and accept whatever element of truth it contains.

I am sure no one wishes that I should stop criticizing lest others follow my example. Moreover, in criticizing Kathiawaris I ask all Gujaratis to give up talking and start working. If the former regard me as one of them, they would pay attention to my criticism, consider what substance there was in it and act accordingly. I am certainly vain enough to believe that Kathiawaris would listen to me, though they might not listen to others. However, I make no distinction between Gujarat and Kathiawar. The people in both regions are Gujaratis. Kathiawar is "little" Gujarat. Add Kathiawar and Kutch to Gujarat and, you get Maha Gujarat. The latter is a small part of India. I happen to have better knowledge of the language of that part. Since it knows me better, I have a greater right to offer bitter pills to it than to others; if Maha Gujarat does not swallow them, to which other Province can I offer them, which Province can I call upon to test the efficacy of my medicine?

In conclusion, I hope that the politicians in Kathiawar will hold their love of facile talking in complete check, give up scheming and start working silently and so prove my criticism to be unfounded. I am not interested in criticizing people; by doing so, I hope merely to get the utmost work out of Kathiawar.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-6-1924

88. FORGIVE ME, PLEASE!

On Thursday morning,[1] many brothers and sisters of Ahmedabad had gathered on the railway station in the hope that I would alight there and they could meet me, but they were disappointed. For this, I apologize to them. Vallabhbhai felt that the people would not restrain their eagerness despite my appeal and his own efforts, and, making me alight from the train which he got stopped midway[2], took me quietly to the Ashram.

It is only when all those who were thus disappointed take to spinning that I shall be convinced that they have forgiven me. Really speaking, they owe me an apology. Why did they go to the station at all? It was their fault that they went to the station disregarding my entreaty.[3] It was the country's loss that it thereby received so much less of hand-spun yarn. Therefore, if it was a fact that these disappointed brothers and sisters went to the station, not out of curiosity, but out of love, I would request them to make good the loss of yarn.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-6-1924

89. VIDYAPITH AND ANANDSHANKARBHAI

A student of Gujarat Vidyapith, who loves the institution, wrote to me as follows:[4]

The subject of this letter, its language and its thoughts, the overflowing patriotism in it and its boundless love for the Vidyapith appealed to me so much that I felt it would be good to put the whole of it before the reader, long as it is. However, I am on such terms with Anandshankarbhai that I felt that the extract from his speech which the correspondent had quoted did not do justice to him. I felt that, rather than publish the letter first and then get a reply from Anandshankarbhai, I would be doing greater justice

[1] May 29

[2] At Kankaria railway yard

[3] *Vide* "My Request", 25-5-1924, wherein Gandhiji had appealed to the people of Ahmedabad not to take the trouble to come to the station, but to give that time to spinning.

[4] The letter is not translated here.

to the subject, the student and Anandshankarbhai by sending the letter to him first and getting his reply, and then publishing both together. My friendship and affection for him also led me to the same conclusion. The reader will also see from the result that I did well to get Anandshankarbhai's letter and publish it along with the other one. Our reporters—especially when the speeches are in Gujarati—fail, though perhaps not intentionally, to take them down in full, and even when they take a full report, the editor cannot spare the necessary space for every speech. The result is that the reports are often mutilated and, sometimes, distort the speaker's meaning. In such a state of affairs, it is often difficult to decide which report to trust and which not to trust. It is for this reason that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta[1] wrote out all his important speeches. Gokhale was keen on correcting the reports of his speeches himself as far as possible. None of us whose services were at his disposal were allowed to correct his speeches in South Africa, all of which were reported verbatim in the papers. In spite of his delicate health, he took it upon himself to correct every report. I have myself had bitter experience of what is done to my speeches. The reporters are not to blame for this. The very conditions are such that only a few reporters are able to give correct reports.

With these experiences in mind, I sent the foregoing letter to Anandshankarbhai and requested him for a reply. His reply is as follows:[2]

There is little that I have to add to this reply. I too would welcome another institution of the kind which Anandshankarbhai would like to see established. But the time and circumstances are perhaps not ripe yet. I believe that the sentiments expressed by the student-correspondent are most admirable. My ideas about education go much further even than his. In my humble opinion, knowledge should never be used for acquiring wealth. Business should be the only means of doing so. The means of livelihood should be labour, i.e., weaving, carpentry, tailoring and such other occupations essential for maintaining human life. I believe that one of the chief reasons for our moral fall is that doctors, lawyers, teachers and others acquire their knowledge mainly for getting money and, in fact, use it for that purpose. What I have set out is, of course, an ideal, which we cannot attain. I have no doubt, however, that the nearer we get to it, the better for us. The Vidyapith has not

[1] Sir Pherozeshah Merwanji Mehta (1845-1915); member of the Bombay Corporation, 1872-1915; member of Bombay Legislature for 30 years; member, Imperial Legislative Council; President of the Congress, 1890

[2] Not translated here

set this ideal before itself, but it has given primary importance to cultivating the spirit of patriotism. The idea of a "career" has no place in an institution which is inspired by the ideal that knowledge should be used in the service of the country and that earning of wealth should come second. Only a person who has renounced the idea of a career for himself should seek admission to the Vidyapith. Since this ideal has not yet taken hold of the minds of people either in Gujarat or in the rest of the country, it is not surprising that Vidyapiths dedicated to this ideal should have only a few students in the first few years. In fact, it is a pleasant surprise that thousands of students are having their literary education under the inspiring guidance of the Vidyapith and, at the same time, are acquiring the spirit of patriotic service.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-6-1924

90. GURUKUL KANGRI

I had sent a letter to the pupils of this Gurukul on their annual day. In answer to it I received a letter from them many days ago. I place before the readers a part of this letter to show what faith the Gurukul children have in the charkha:

> Although we were conscious that this reply to your message is wholly inadequate, we nevertheless wish to place at your revered feet this offering of a little yarn spun by us. We have prepared this yarn from round-the-clock non-stop plying of the charkha during the seven days of the National Week (April 7 to 13) in the hope that our humble offering will be accepted. This includes separately the yarn spun by the younger children among us (those of class IV). Although this yarn has not been secured from a non-stop plying of the charkha, we do think that these little children who love you deserve your love. Therefore this yarn, spun with devotion during the National Week, deserves to be offered at your feet.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 1-6-1924

91. A HINT TO ORGANIZERS OF CONFERENCES

People say that the days of big public meetings, processions and speeches are past, that the time has come to work while keeping the mouth shut. But the organizers of conferences and public meetings are always anxious to make great shows of them. In their zeal, many times they forget the truth and practise deception on the innocent public while making preparations for conferences. A notice about some conference says:

> It is a matter of great pleasure that the conference is going to take place in a big way. Important leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, the Ali Brothers, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Kitchlew[1], Maulana Abul Kalam Azad[2], Devdas Gandhi, Shankerlal Banker[3], Rajagopalachari[4], Seth Jamnalal Bajaj[5], Maulana A. Jafar Khan, Shrimati Gandhi, Bi Amma Sahiba, Tapasvi Sunderlal, Makhanlal Chaturvedi[6], Shrimati Subhadra Kumari, etc., are expected to come.

It is possible that the reception committee has sent invitations to these leaders. But till replies have been received from them saying that they will try to come, it is not true to say that they are expected to come. However commendable the intention may be, it is improper to mislead people. Once or twice people may be deceived, but very soon the workers lose their prestige as well as the trust of the people. Abraham Lincoln has rightly said: "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 1-6-1924

[1] A Congress leader of the Punjab

[2] 1889-1958; Congress leader and scholar of Koranic theology; President of the Indian National Congress, 1923, 1940-5; Education Minister, Government of India

[3] Political worker and labour leader of Ahmedabad; printer and publisher of *Young India*

[4] C. Rajagopalachari (b. 1879); lawyer, journalist, author and statesman; Governor-General of India, 1948-50

[5] 1889-1942; businessman, social worker and philanthropist; treasurer of the Congress for a number of years and a close associate of Gandhiji

[6] Well-known Hindi poet and patriot, editor of *Karmavir*

92. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SABARMATI,
Jyeshtha Sud 1 [*June 3, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I have written to the leader of the Antyaja Mandal that you made no promise to give them Rs. 30,000.

It is no doubt bad that the community[2] is divided into two factions. If, however, your group behaves courteously with the other, it will stop the venom from spreading. It is of course true that peace and strife cannot go on together. If you choose one or the other and stick to it, then only can you get its fruit. The result of strife we see in the condition of Europe. True love is altogether absent there. The way of peace has so far never been practised by communities.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6047. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

93. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

Jyeshtha Sud 1 [*June 3, 1924*][3]

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have your postcard. Study the *Ramayana* very carefully. It won't do to read it only once. I am sure the *Ramayana* will give you peace of mind. Are all the patients improving?

Blessings from
BAPU

PARASRAM MEHROTRA
U. P. KHADDAR BOARD
CAWNPORE

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4960. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

[1] The reference in the letter to factions in the addressee's community suggests that it was written in 1924, as were the letters to him dated May 13 and 20. In 1924, *Jyeshtha Sud* 1 fell on June 3.

[2] The Marwari community

[3] The postmark bears this date.

94. *INTERVIEW TO "SWATANTRYA"*

[SABARMATI,
June 3, 1924][1]

Q. Since your release from Yeravda Jail, do you think that there is some change in your writing?

A. Yes, there is.

Q. Because of your too much stress on non-violence as a religion, the Congress had to pass a resolution of self-defence as regards Congress volunteers.

A. It was not right for the Congress to pass such a resolution. The same meaning was already included in my definition of non-violence.

Q. Do you not think, Mahatmaji, that Congress leaders at least found your definition rather vague?

A. Yes, you are right. Every religionist should try to find out authorities on non-violence in his own religious books. I am preaching non-violence so that people may be induced to find out the real meaning of non-violence according to their religious texts.

The correspondent then asked Mahatmaji to explain the limits of non-violence against a thief, dacoit or foreign invasion. He [Gandhiji] narrated the story of a great saint, Eknath Maharaj [who] having found his house attacked by thieves, prayed to God lest the robbers might go away without finding any booty.

Q. This is possible for a mahatma, but not for ordinary people. What do you advise people to do under such circumstances?

A. We must protect ourselves from thieves, etc. The difference you have shown is quite correct.

Q. Don't you think that Englishmen also fall under this category?

A. No, the present-day Englishmen are not so. The East India Company may be regarded as such. But are you going to call robbers' sons also as robbers?

Q. If such sons are also following their fathers' vocation, we must call them thieves.

[1] *Vide* footnote 2, p. 159.

A. No, no. The English people of the present day are not such, hence we must remain non-violent. To dispossess the English of their power, we need the will and not the arms and, moreover, so long as the Congress has adopted non-violence as its policy, we must be non-violent. I have illustrated my meaning in my article headed "My Mission",[1] by taking the illustration of a prisoner at the gallows and a jailor. This whole question I shall have to get settled finally in the coming Congress.

Q. Mahatmaji, have you read the evidence which Mohammedans gave before the Government enquiry committee regarding the Hindu-Muslim disputes at Nagpur? The Mohammedan witnesses said that Lokamanya Tilak was responsible for fostering such quarrels among the Hindus and Mohammedans, and that every Mohammedan has a right to convert, at any time, his house into a masjid.

A. No, I have not read that.[2] I shall certainly read that. It is simply ungratefulness to accuse the Lokamanya of having given rise to such communal feuds. It was Lokamanya Tilak himself who personally told me that, if by giving cent per cent representation to Mohammedans, swaraj would be attained, he (Lokamanya Tilak) was willing to sign such a pact. Dr. Moonje has specially requested me not to write anything about Nagpur.

Mahatmaji further said that the people must find out their own way for their liberation, and expressed regret that the leaders of the country have not very seriously considered the utility of his own method of non-violent non-co-operation.

The Hindu, 12-6-1924

95. NOTES

Tarkeshwar Satyagraha

I have received various telegrams on the situation in Tarkeshwar. Two of them invite me to go there and advise. My going is out of the question, if only because I am too weak yet to undertake fatiguing journeys. But what I have said generally about Vaikom applies to Tarkeshwar. There should be no force nor show of it for the purpose of taking possession. The rush of railwaymen and their blocking the progress of the train (if the facts reported are true)

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 346-9.

[2] Here the correspondent handed to Gandhiji copies of *Swatantrya* requesting him to go through them.

was not only not satyagraha, but the blocking was, to say the least, discreditable. Not even a *mahant* reported to be immoral may be summarily and forcibly dismissed from his possession.

Digging My Own Grave

This is the expression that has been used about my article on Congress organization.[1] I like it. For nothing will please me more than to dig my own grave [rather] than that I should dig that of Truth for which and which alone I want to live. An esteemed English friend who helped me in South Africa once told me: "Do you know that I have thrown myself heart and soul into your movement because you represent a minority? For I believe that truth always lies with minorities. You should not therefore be surprised at my opposing you, friends though we are, if I ever find you representing a majority." I have often wondered, and never more so than now, whether the friend was not right and whether he would not have come to the conclusion that I must be in the wrong as I am at present supposed to be representing a majority. But whether the friend was right or wrong, I hope that the A.I.C.C. will not hesitate to put me in a minority and I shall also hope that I shall not be found untrue to my faith. I assure them that I shall work as zealously under defeat as, perhaps, I have worked with the tide flowing with me. If we want to serve India, we must put measures before men. The latter come and go, but causes must survive even the greatest of them.

An Arya Samaj Protest

I have received the following wire from Agra Arya Samaj:

> Agra enters emphatic protest against strictures made by you regarding Arya Samaj, Rishi Dayanand, Swami Shraddhanandji, *Satyarth Prakash* and *shuddhi* movement, which it trusts have been made unconsciously because of lack of full acquaintance with Arya Samaj teachings.[2] Respectfully prays you to reconsider your views and remove misgivings likely to be produced.

I publish the telegram, as I am sure the Agra Samaj represents a considerable body of Arya Samaj opinion. All I can say in reply is that I have not written a single word in the reference to the Samaj or Rishi Dayanand or Swami Shraddhanandji without deep consideration. It was easy enough for me to suppress my

[1] *Vide* "Congress Organization", 29-5-1924.

[2] The reference is to Gandhiji's observations in the article "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure", 29-5-1924.

opinion. But, consistently with truth, I could not do so when it became relevant. Hindu-Muslim tension is a grim reality. Removal of it is a stern national necessity. It cannot be brought about by ignoring or suppressing facts. Truth on such occasions must be told, no matter how unpalatable it may be. But I claim no infallibility. As yet I have seen nothing to revise my views. I cannot plead ignorance. I claim to have read *Satyarth Prakash*. I have the privilege of knowing Shraddhanandji intimately. My writing therefore is deliberate. But if any Arya Samajist can convince me that I have erred in any single particular, I shall gladly confess my error, apologize and withdraw the erroneous statement.

Punishment or Reward

Thoreau has said that, under a despotic government, plenty is a crime and poverty a merit. In other words, the frowns of such a government are any day welcome. One has to be cautious about its smiles. Taken in this light, the punishment of the *Swarajya* of Madras may be treated as a reward for public services rendered. I can therefore only congratulate Mr. Prakasam[1] upon his paper being the first to be on the black list of the Madras Government. That the Indian members of that Government are responsible for this reward does not surprise me. They could do no better. They must either sustain that Government or resign. They believe in that Government being for the good of the country. Non-violent non-co-operation is intended to quicken the process of disillusionment. That process has been slow because we have believed only somewhat in non-co-operation and still less in non-violence.

Luxury Not Power

Borodada writes thus from Shantiniketan:

> The reason why you exhort us to concentrate all our energy on the constructive programme is simply this. You want us to produce by our own hands the necessaries of life, and thereby gain power. If we once get the initial power simply to live, we can gradually gain more power to live comfortably afterwards. But if we take only that which Government pleases to give us, we will get something no doubt but will not gain power, and thus will become weaker and weaker every day. For, as long as power remains with the Government, we will be at its mercy. It is natural that the Government will look after its own interest and we will look after our own. It is foolish to expect that the Government will

[1] T. Prakasam (1876–1955); Congress leader of Andhra; first Chief Minister of composite Madras State

give us power to nullify its own power of doing anything it likes. It is ready to give us the materials of luxury when the great masses are suffering from want of food and clothing. It will not part with the least of its power, unless forced by circumstances. That power is exerted mainly for its own interest and by no means for the real well-being of the Indian masses.

Is it not only too true that the towns buy their luxuries at the expense of the poor, whilst all the power resides in the hands of a Government totally irresponsible and irresponsive to the people?

The Wheel to the Rescue

The following letter from Babu Bhupendra Narayan Sen cannot fail to interest the reader :

Duadonda is a village in the sub-division of Arambagh, district Hooghly and is about 7 miles west of Raja Ram Mohun Roy's[1] birthplace, Radhanagar. In June 1922, there occurred a severe flood in the river Darakeshwar and my friend Sj. Prafulla Chandra Sen was deputed by the Hooghly District Congress Committee for relief work in the flooded area. When Prafulla proposed to distribute the charkha to insure against famine which generally attends such flood, he was ridiculed by the Flood Relief Committee. Undaunted, my friend promised that he would make the charkha a success even in such a backward N.C.O. district as Hooghly. With only three co-workers, he began to tramp from villager's door to door with a bag of cotton, with some charkhas and other implements. The younger generation laughed to his face, the older people wisely shook their heads and remarked that there was a time when the charkha's musical hum was a feature of village life. At last, they succeeded in introducing a dozen charkhas and began to feed the spinners regularly with cotton and wages. In order that the spinners might store sufficient yarn for weaving their own clothes, Prafulla used to give them cotton instead of wages, i.e., for 5 *tolas* of yarn given by a spinner, he gave 10 *tolas* of cotton in return and to the needy he gave spinning wages @ 3 pies per *tola* of yarn spun, carding being done by the spinners themselves. The earnest and steady spinning by the said twelve spinners drew the attention of young and old alike. The people who scoffed at charkha now wondered at the beautiful khaddar saris which the spinners had woven out of their own hand-spun yarn and began to envy the spinners who earned such wages. They now began to request my friend for charkhas, promising that they would ply them regularly. The number increased and in 3 or 4 months the number of spinners was a hundred, and my friend's abilities were put to severe test to keep them all going and

[1] 1774-1833; scholar, social reformer and founder of Brahmo Samaj; worked for the abolition of sati

the nucleus of our organization was thus established. The Mohammedan ladies were the first to revive this charkha culture and their Hindu sisters are also following in their wake. The present number of spinners is more than two hundred.

My own conversion to this khadi programme, i.e., village-work, may interest you a little. I was working as secretary, Jorabagan Congress Committee, Calcutta. At the invitation of my friend Prafulla, I came to this place to see him working and it is here and here alone I became convinced of the potentialities of the charkha in the building up of our national life. From daybreak to sunset, people old and young came with yarn to get double quantity of slivers or to sell it for meeting the weaver's demand. Old spinners were all clad in khaddar saris woven out of their own yarn. Their hunger-stricken faces had now sparks of joy. I began to chat with them and learnt that my friend's work had kept the wolf from their doors; that women, who used to beg for their sustenance, were now well-off; that they no longer quarrelled among themselves because they had now no idle time left after carding and spinning; that their husbands could not now ill-treat them as they were contributing considerably to the family fund; and lastly, but not the least, their izzat was saved. I could learn all these things because I was introduced to them as a khadi worker; otherwise, nothing on earth could have moved these *purdahnashin* ladies to talk so intimately with a stranger. Near about sunset, the male population of the village began to arrive at our centre and they came daily to hear my friend's conversation on various topics. They all expressed their deepest sympathy for our work and anxiously prayed that it might continue for ever. This evening's gathering made me at once remember one of your beautiful sayings: 'Non-co-operation with the Government for more co-operation with the people', and I thought that this was the rightest way to do it. In short, I could not resist myself the temptation of serving these poor innocent people; I gave up my town Congress work and came down here. The more we are becoming familiar with the village life, the more convinced we become of the truth of the Bardoli programme and we now believe that we shall want nothing more if we can only work out this programme for the rest of our lives.

Along with khadi work there has begun national education, arbitration, and social service. We have now a separate propaganda department which publishes a litho weekly, namely, *Congress Sambad*, containing exposition on non-violent non-co-operation, khaddar, untouchability, etc. We have named this organization as Satyagraha Sangh, and it has under its control:

1. One spinning centre at Duadonda.
2. One weaving centre at Baradongal, 7 miles north of Duadonda.
3. One national school at Bandar, 4 miles south of Duadonda. We received help from the following sources mainly:

Flood Relief Committee, Hooghly—Rs. 300/-

Bengal Provincial Congress Swadeshi Board—Rs. 500/-

Jorabagan Congress Flood Trust fund—Rs. 1,500/-

Our assets are :—

(a)	Stock of yarn, khadi cotton, cotton seeds	Rs. 1,200/-
(b)	Looms with weavers	Rs. 200/-
(c)	Spinning-wheels distributed	Rs. 350/-

The other day Sj. Harakhchand Motichand, brother of Sj. Jivanlal, aluminium merchant, came to see our national school and spinning-centre. He expressed satisfaction at our work and has helped us with Rs. 200/- for buying the land on which the national school at Bandar was situated and with Rs. 100/- for building our 'ashram'. For the present we are housed in the bungalow of Mr. J. C. Hazra, a practising barrister of the Calcutta High Court. Mr. Hazra came here during the last Easter holidays. He agreed that the Bardoli programme was the only programme for our country.

The letter shows what a little organization can do and how easily the people take to the wheel when it is presented to them in a workable form. The charkha will turn those who are forced to beg for food into self-respecting artisans and will knit together the literate and the illiterate, the poor and the rich, as nothing else will.

"Brahmacharya" or Self-control

The following is Mahadev Desai's translation of an article[1] I wrote on this delicate subject in *Navajivan* of 25th May 1924. I gladly publish it in *Young India* as I have before me many letters from the other parts of India on the same subject. The stray thoughts collected together in the article might be of some help to those who are earnestly striving for a pure life. My inquirers have been all Hindus and naturally the article is addressed to them. The last paragraph is the most important and operative part. The names Allah or God carry with them the same potency. The idea is to realize the presence of God in us. All sins are committed in secrecy. The moment we realize that God witnesses even our thoughts, we shall be free.

About Principal Gidwani

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has sent a letter in the following terms to the Administrator of Nabha:

[1] Not reproduced here. For the text *vide* pp. 116-9.

I have just read in *Young India* of the 22nd a letter dated 12th May written by you to Mr. M. K. Gandhi in regard to Mr. Gidwani's imprisonment.[1] It is stated in this letter that you suspended the sentences passed against Principal Gidwani, Mr. K. Santanam and me on condition that we left the State and did not return thereto without permission. My recollection of this episode is entirely at variance with this. I was and still am under the impression that our sentences were suspended unconditionally. There was no reference, so far as I can remember, in the order of suspension under sec. 407 C.P.C. or even on the piece of paper containing this order, to any condition, or to our returning to Nabha with or without permission. This point was further cleared up by our conversation with the Superintendent of the Jail and the Chief of Police who were present. Subsequently, we were informed of another order—styled an executive order—on another piece of paper, wherein we were asked to leave the State and not to return without permission. In this second paper there was no mention of our sentences or suspensions. My request for copies of the orders was not granted nor was I allowed to copy them myself. I was told that you had expressly forbidden copies. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know if the facts I have stated above about the suspension order are correct. I shall also be obliged if you will also send me copies of the suspension order and the 'executive order'. You will admit, I hope, that it is only fair to me to supply me with these copies so that I may know where I stand.

Pandit Jawaharlal's letter would go to show that the revival of Principal Gidwani's old sentence and his consequent incarceration are totally unjustified even if they are not illegal. Surely the three patriots were entitled to see the conditions of their release. As I have already shown, Principal Gidwani entered in no spirit of defiance. He entered only in the interest of humanity. The public will be interested to know the Administrator's reply to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Luxury and Laziness

A gentleman has sent me a long letter on the difficulties surrounding khaddar propaganda. I copy the relevant parts of that letter.

There is much spinning in our province. It is no exaggeration when I say that every lady in our villages is a spinner. Even little girls know and practise the art. Weavers are in abundance in this province. A large quantity of khaddar can be produced in this province. When I see the vast field of work for khaddar production, I feel that I should work and

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 22-5-1924.

work hard. But when I come to the Khaddar Depot of our Congress Committee, I find very few people buying our cloth. People who had begun weaving khaddar have begun to use mill yarn cloth or some even foreign cloth.

The Congress appealed to the sentiments of the people. They discarded foreign cloth and some even burnt it. They adopted khaddar. But its inherent defects became apparent. The result is that they do not like to wear it now. The defects are:

1. The stuff is very heavy; the ladies do not tolerate it.
2. On account of its weight, it is not easy to wash.
3. It is not a children's cloth, for their clothing requires constant washing and it is very difficult to do so in case of khaddar.
4. It has got no variety and we cannot give fast colours to it.
5. It catches dust.
6. It is dearer than the mill-cloth. We purchase hand-spun yarn one pound in a rupee, while Indian mill-cloth is sold at Amritsar at the same rate, that is one pound per rupee.

The rich people do not like to wear this cloth as it does not satisfy their tastes, while the poor cannot afford to wear it, considering its price, washing charges, and other expenses.

Only the agricultural class in the villages uses it. They get cotton from their fields. Their ladies do the ginning and the spinning. They have to pay for the carding and weaving which is not much as the labour is very cheap in the villages. It is a bye-product for them. By using it they save money which they do not get so easily as the people in the towns do.

The writer is connected with the khaddar movement and believes in it. It is clear, however, that his argument is an argument of luxury and laziness. Khadi propaganda certainly cannot succeed where they reign supreme. If we desire swaraj, we must be prepared to work and give up luxurious tastes, at least for the time being. A soldier who is unwilling to give up conveniences cannot fight. India, if it cannot part with the soft and cheap calico in favour of rough khadi, will certainly not get swaraj. The Punjab is the best province immediately to displace all mill-cloth. But that the difficulties come from the Punjabis shows how we have fallen. If the Punjabis want fine cloth, the remedy is not to buy mill-cloth but for the Punjabi sisters to spin even as fine yarn as the Andhra sisters. The Andhra spinning gives one all the fineness one can expect. Nor is it a difficult thing to accomplish. Just as, if we want fine *chapatis*, we must roll them fine and not go elsewhere in search of fine ones, so should we spin fine yarn, if we want fine cloth. The ladies have no right to grumble at the heaviness of their khaddar if they are too lazy to spin fine. Khaddar is eminently children's

cloth, if we would clothe them for protection and not for show. Khaddar is capable of giving as much variety as mill-cloth. But it requires revival of the original skill of our forefathers. Khaddar is today dearer than mill-cloth because we have not yet put this national cottage industry on a sound basis. But surely we cannot count the cost if we will be free. Experience of hundreds of khaddar-wearers is that it having simplified their taste, though it is dearer yard for yard, the quantity required being much less than before, khaddar wear is undoubtedly cheaper. For the poor people khaddar need not be dearer, because they can grow their own cotton and gin, card, spin and weave it themselves. Closely examined, the argument is answered by carrying on a ceaseless propaganda among the Punjabi sisters asking them to spin not below 20 counts. An expert spinner can readjust their spindles so as to enable them to spin higher counts without much extra energy or time being required.

What Is a Spinner?

People often say that they can spin only because they are able to draw the thread. This is, however, a false notion. A baker is one who bakes bread that can be eaten and digested. And it is not enough if he only knows how to bake. He must know, as he does know, all the processes that flour has to go through and know also its different varieties. Similarly, a spinner is one who draws an even and well-twisted thread that can be woven without difficulty. If the thread is under-twisted or over-twisted, it is of no use for weaving purposes. And since it is not possible to spin well without good slivers, a spinner ought to know carding and sliver making. He ought also to tell the staples of different varieties of cotton and be able to spin a given count, to, say, 30 counts. And just as a carpenter who cannot sharpen or mend his tools is worthless, so is a spinner worthless who cannot mend his bow or the wheel or who cannot tell a crooked from a straight spindle and who cannot straighten a crooked one. Many leave off spinning because their wheel has got out of order. A spinning examination, therefore, should, in my opinion, cover all the points I have raised. The course need not frighten the reader. It is easy enough for those who would apply themselves to the work. The thing is to treat it seriously.[1]

[1] The paragraph that follows is from *Navajivan*, 8-6-1924, where Gandhiji covered, in an article under the same title, much the same ground. The paragraph added here, however, does not occur in *Young India*.

One who has faith can secure everything and everything appears easy to him. One who is without faith finds everything difficult. To learn spinning is to cease to be indolent and become industrious. One should practise rather than preach. Swaraj can never be won by speeches; it will be secured only through action. Spinning is the only activity which all people can undertake. India became dependent and impoverished when the spinning-wheel came to be discarded. Her prosperity lies in its revival.

Young India, 5-6-1924

96. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Let me summarize the long statement[1] issued last week on this the greatest of all questions for the Indian patriot. The posterity will judge both the faiths by the manner in which the followers of each acquit themselves in the matter. However good Hinduism or Islam may be in the abstract, the only way each can be judged is by the effect produced by each on its votaries considered as a whole.

The following then is the summary of the statement.

Causes

1. The remote cause of the tension is the Moplah rebellion.
2. The attempt of Mr. Fazl Hussain to rearrange the distribution of posts in the education department consistently with the number of Mussalmans in the Punjab and consequent Hindu opposition.
3. The *shuddhi* movement.
4. The most potent being tiredness of non-violence and the fear that the communities might, by a long course of training in non-violence, forget the law of retaliation and self-defence.
5. Mussalman cow-slaughter and Hindu music.
6. Hindu cowardice and consequent Hindu distrust of Mussalmans.
7. Mussalman bullying.
8. Mussalman distrust of Hindu fair play.

Cure

1. The master-key to the solution is the replacement of the rule of the sword by that of arbitration.

[1] *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure", 29-5-1924.

Honest public opinion should make it impossible for aggrieved parties to take the law into their own hands and every case must be referred to private arbitration or to law-courts if the parties do not believe in non-co-operation.

2. Ignorant fear of cowardly non-violence, falsely so called, taking the place of violence should be dispelled.

3. Growing mutual distrust among the leaders must, if they believe in unity, give place to trust.

4. Hindus must cease to fear the Mussalman bully and the Mussalmans should consider it beneath their dignity to bully their Hindu brothers.

5. Hindus must not imagine they can force Mussalmans to give up cow-sacrifice. They must trust, by befriending Mussalmans, that the latter will, of their own accord, give up cow-sacrifice out of regard for their Hindu neighbours.

6. Nor must Mussalmans imagine they can force Hindus to stop music or *arati* before mosques. They must befriend the Hindus and trust them to pay heed to reasonable Mussalman sentiment.

7. Hindus must leave to the Mussalmans and the other minorities the question of representation on elected bodies, and gracefully and whole-heartedly give effect to the findings of such referee. If I had my way I should appoint Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan as the sole referee leaving him free to consult Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, etc, as he considers best.

8. Employment under national government must be according to merit to be decided by a board of examiners representing different communities.

9. *Shuddhi* or *tabligh* as such cannot be disturbed, but either must be conducted honestly and by men of proved character. It should avoid all attack on other religions. There should be no secret propaganda and no offer of material rewards.

10. Public opinion should be so cultivated as to put under the ban all the scurrilous writings, principally in a section of the Punjab Press.

11. Nothing is possible without the Hindus shedding their timidity. Theirs is the largest stake and they must be prepared to sacrifice the most.

But how is the cure to be effected? Who will convince the Hindu maniac that the best way to save the cow is for him to do his duty by her and not goad his Mussalman brother? Who will convince the Mussalman fanatic that it is not religion but irreligion to break the head of his Hindu brother when he plays music in front of his mosque? Or, again, who will make the Hindu see that he

will lose nothing by the minorities being even over-represented on the elective public secular bodies? These are fair questions and show the difficulty of working out the solution.

But if the solution is the only true solution, all difficulties must be overcome. In reality the difficulty is only apparent. If there are even a few Hindus and a few Mussalmans who have a living faith in the solution, the rest is easy. Indeed, even if there are a few Hindus only, or a few Mussalmans only with that faith, the solution would be still easy. They have but to work away single-heartedly and the others will follow them. And the conversion of only one party is enough because the solution requires no bargains. For instance, Hindus should cease to worry Mussalmans about the cow without expecting any consideration from the latter. They should yield to the Mussalman demand, whatever it may be, regarding representation, again without requiring any return. And if the Mussalmans insist on stopping Hindu music or *arati* by force, the Hindus will continue playing it although every single Hindu should die at his post, but without retaliation. The Mussalmans will then be shamed into doing the right thing in an incredibly short space of time. Mussalmans can do likewise, if they choose, and shame the Hindus into doing the right thing. One has to dare to believe.

But in practice it will not be thus; on the contrary, both will act simultaneously as soon as the workers become true to themselves. Unfortunately they are not. They are mostly ruled by passion and prejudice. Each tries to hide the shortcomings of his co-religionists and so the circle of distrust and suspicion ever widens.

I hope that, at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, it will be possible to find out a method of work which will bring a speedy end to the tension.

It has been suggested to me that the Government are fomenting these dissensions. I should hope not. But assuming that they are, surely it is up to us to neutralize such efforts by ourselves acting truly and faithfully.

Young India, 5-6-1924

97. *ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE*

The forthcoming session of the All-India Congress Committee will decide the future work of the Congress for the ensuing six months. Six months for a nation which is in a hurry to get her own is a long time to lose. Every moment is precious. The members of the All-India Congress Committee are representatives of representatives. They are or should be the real executive of the nation. They can, if they will, hasten swaraj. They must be men and women with an unquenchable faith in the national programme for the time being. They must enforce it in their own lives and induce others to do likewise. Three hundred and fifty representatives working with one mind cannot but produce an instantaneous impression upon the country.

Let each one of us ask himself or herself:

1. Do I believe in non-violence and truth for the purpose of gaining swaraj?

2. Do I sincerely believe in Hindu-Muslim unity?

3. Do I believe in the capacity of the charkha to solve the problem of the economic distress of the starving millions of India and, in order to make hand-spun khaddar universal, am I prepared to spin religiously for half an hour at least per day, except when actually travelling continuously for twenty-four hours? And am I prepared to use nothing but hand-spun khaddar?

4. Do I believe in the boycott of government titles, government schools, law-courts and Councils?

5. If a Hindu, do I believe that untouchability is a blot upon Hinduism?

6. Do I believe in the complete abolition of the drink and drug evil in spite of the fact that the whole of the revenue will be wiped out at a single stroke?

In my opinion, no one who does not believe in the foregoing articles of the Congress programme should remain in the All-India Congress Committee. It is necessary to draw attention to all the articles because I know that many members do not believe in non-violence and truth. I hear, too, that there are practising lawyers in the Congress executives, that there are members who do not exclusively and always wear khaddar garments, that there are non-co-operators who are actually on the managing committees of national schools and who send their own children to Government

schools, and that, lastly, merchants who trade in foreign or mill-made cloth are still on Congress executives. I can only say that it is impossible to carry on the Congress programme to a successful issue if we who have to work it do not carry it out in our own persons. How can a practising lawyer ask or expect his brother to give up his practice, or one who does not himself spin demonstrate the necessity of others' spinning?

I shall plead before the Committee for an honest programme. If the majority have another programme, I would advise the minority to resign and attend to the Congress programme from outside the A.I.C.C. There has been too much disregard of Congress resolutions and demands from the Working Committee. I would therefore also suggest that the members should, at the end of every month, send yarn of their own spinning, at least ten *tolas* of at least ten counts of even and well-twisted yarn. This quantity can be easily spun in thirty days at the rate of half an hour per day. The yarn should reach the secretary, Khadi Board, not later than the 15th of each month. He who fails to send the requisite quantity should be deemed to have resigned. Likewise, those who do not send returns of hand-carding, hand-spinning, hand-weaving and hand-spun yarn from month to month in their own areas should be deemed to have resigned. The returns should reach the secretary every month, not later than the 15th of every month.

I know that these are hard conditions for those who do not wish to work and easy for those who do. There is no way of working the programme unless the chosen representatives of the people work.

There has been too much laxity about our method of work. It is time that we become a little less unbusiness-like. The charge that the programme is uninspiring or that a nation of spinners cannot achieve swaraj does not frighten me, because I know nothing so inspiring as a programme of solid work and I am convinced that we have to become once again a nation of carders, spinners and weavers if we are ever to banish starvation from the land and become economically independent.

Young India, 5-6-1924

98. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES–VII

SATYAGRAHI PRISONERS' CONDUCT

The argument advanced by some friends and put by me at the end of the last chapter[1] deserves consideration if only because so many honestly believe in it and so many followed it out consistently in their conduct in 1921 and 1922, when thousands went to jail.

In the first instance, even outside the jails, embarrassment of the Government is not our goal. We are indifferent if the Government is embarrassed so long as our conduct is right. Our non-co-operation embarrasses the Government as nothing else can. But we non-co-operate as lawyers or Councillors because it is our duty. That is to say, we will not cease to non-co-operate if we discovered that our non-co-operation pleased the rulers. And we are so indifferent because we believe that, by non-co-operation, we must ultimately benefit ourselves. But there cannot be any such non-co-operation in the jails. We do not enter them to serve a selfish end. We are taken there by the Government as criminals according to their estimation. Our business, therefore, is to disillusion them by acting in an exemplary (and by them expected) manner, just as our business outside is to disillusion them by avoiding, say, their law-courts, schools or Councils or titles and by showing that we are prepared to do without their doubtful benefits.

Whether all of us realize it or not the method of non-co-operation is a process of touching the heart and appealing to reason, not one of frightening by rowdyism. Rowdyism has no place in a non-violent movement.

I have often likened satyagrahi prisoners to prisoners of war. Once caught by the enemy, prisoners of war act towards the enemy as friends. It will be considered dishonourable on the part of a soldier as a prisoner of war to deceive the enemy. It does not affect my argument that the Government does not regard satyagrahi prisoners as prisoners of war. If we act as such, we shall soon command respect. We must make the prisons a neutral institution in which we may, nay, must co-operate to a certain extent.

We would be highly inconsistent and hardly self-respecting if, on the one hand, we deliberately break prison rules and, in the same breath, complain of punishment and strictness. We may not,

[1] *Vide* p. 99.

for instance, resist and complain of search and, at the same time, conceal prohibited things in our blankets or our clothes. There is nothing in satyagraha that I know whereby we may, under certain circumstances, tell untruths or practise other deception.

When we say that, if we make the lives of prison officials uncomfortable, the Government will be obliged to sue for peace, we either pay them a subtle compliment or regard them as simpletons. We pay a subtle compliment when we consider that, even though we may make prison officials' lives uncomfortable, the Government will look on in silence and hesitate to award us condign punishment so as utterly to break our spirit. That is to say, we regard the administrators to be so considerate and humane that they will not severely punish us even though we give them sufficient cause. As a matter of fact, they will not and do not hesitate to throw overboard all idea of decency and award not only authorized but even unauthorized punishments on given occasions.

But it is my deliberate conviction that, had we but acted with uniform honesty and dignity behoving satyagrahis, we should have disarmed all opposition on the part of the Government, and such strictly honourable behaviour on the part of so many prisoners would have at least shamed the Government into confessing their error in imprisoning so many honourable and innocent men. For, is it not their case that our non-violence is but a cloak for our violence? Do we not, therefore, play into their hands every time we are rowdy?

In my opinion, therefore, as satyagrahis we are bound, when we become prisoners:

1. to act with the most scrupulous honesty;
2. to co-operate with the prison officials in their administration;
3. to set, by our obedience to all reasonable discipline, an example to co-prisoners;
4. to ask for no favours and claim no privileges which the meanest of prisoners do not get and which we do not need strictly for reasons of health;
5. not to fail to ask what we do so need and not to get irritated if we do not obtain it;
6. to do all the tasks allotted, to the utmost of our ability.

It is such conduct which will make the Government position uncomfortable and untenable. It is difficult for them to meet honesty with honesty for their want of faith and unpreparedness for such a rare eventuality. Rowdyism they expect and meet with a double dose of it. They were able to deal with anarchical crime,

but they have not yet found out any way of dealing with non-violence save by yielding to it.

The idea behind the imprisonment of a satyagrahi is that he expects relief through humble submission to suffering. He believes that meek suffering for a just cause has a virtue all its own and infinitely greater than the virtue of the sword. This does not mean that we may not resist when the treatment touches our self-respect. Thus, for instance, we must resist to the point of death the use of abusive language by officials or if they were to throw our food at us which is often done. Insult and abuse are no part of an official's duty. Therefore, we must resist them. But we may not resist search because it is part of prison regulations.

Nor are my remarks about mute suffering to be construed to mean that there should be no agitation against putting innocent prisoners like satyagrahis in the same class as confirmed criminals. Only as prisoners we may not ask for favours. We must be content to live with the confirmed criminals and even welcome the opportunity of working moral reform in them. It is however expected of a Government that calls itself civilized to recognize the most natural divisions.

Young India, 5-6-1924

99. REMARKS ON MANILAL GANDHI'S LETTER

The reader will appreciate the following translation of a letter from my son Manilal Gandhi describing Mrs. Naidu's sterling work in South Africa.[1]

Young India, 5-6-1924

[1] The letter, not reproduced here, spoke of the good effects of Sarojini Naidu's visit to South Africa, which included the dropping of the Class Areas Bill. It read: ". . . On the suggestion of Mrs. Naidu, the South African Indian Congress was held in Durban and considerable work was done, under the presidentship of Mrs. Naidu, with a solemnity never known before . . . The condition of the Indians here has been like that of destitute children, ever since your departure. Mrs. Naidu has however turned a most disappointing situation into one of the highest hope."

100. COMMENTS ON C. F. ANDREWS'S LETTER

In a private letter, Mr. Andrews has rated me for the khaddar vests and caps he noticed on the beautiful persons of these simple Bhil children. He asks: "Why not be satisfied with khaddar *lungoti*[1] for them?" Amritlal Thakkar[2] can best answer the question. Personally, I have developed a partiality for *lungotis*, more so after having seen so many prisoners in *lungotis* only. But the problem before Mr. Thakkar is not quite simple. He is superintendent not of a jail but a school in which he has to cultivate free manhood and free womanhood. These delightful urchins are great reasoners. Why is our superintendent in a multiplicity of clothes however uncomfortable they appear to be, and we only in *lungotis*? The teachers must, if they will answer such posers satisfactorily, wear and eat what they expect their pupils to wear and eat. In the Indian climate, a khaddar vest is certainly a poor exchange for the comfortable *kuchcha*, which is [an] enlarged *lungoti*.

Young India, 5-6-1924

101. LACK OR EXCESS OF LOVE?

A *Vaishnava* gentleman has lovingly chided me for having used the singular number while referrring to Rama, Shankar[3], Bharat and other incarnations of God. He has been grieved that I have not referred to Rama as "Shri Ramachandra Prabhu[4]" and to Bharat as "Shri Bharatsuri", and has mildly suggested my treating these sacred names with due respect. I could have replied to that friend in a private letter but, in case some other *Vaishnavas* have been similarly pained, I discuss the matter here for all readers. Perhaps, the friend who has written to me does not know that I myself am a *Vaishnava* and that Shri Ramachandra Prabhu is the *ishtadevata*[5] worshipped in my family. Still, to me the name Rama is dearer, though I have written "Shri Ramachandra Prabhu" for once here to satisfy this friend.

[1] Covering fastened at the back, like a codpiece

[2] 1869-1951; popularly known as Thakkar Bapa; devoted his life to the uplift of Harijans and aboriginals

[3] One of the names of Siva

[4] Lord

[5] Chosen deity

"Shri Ramachandra Prabhu" gives me the feeling that He is far away from me, whereas Rama is enthroned in my heart. Wherever I have made use of the sacred names, Rama, Bharat and so on, it seems to me that they express my overflowing love. If this *Vaishnava* friend claims that his love for Rama is greater than mine, I would contest his claim in Rama's court and I am sure to win.

I would be pleased to have my love tested in the same way as Hanuman[1] had wanted his to be. The dearest is ever closest to one's heart. Such a one must needs be addressed as "thou". The use of "you" implies distance. I never addressed my mother as "you"; if I had, by chance, spoken to her any time as "you" she would have broken into tears, for she would have felt that her child was no longer close to her.

There was a time in my life when I knew Rama as Shri Ramachandra. But that time has now passed. Rama has now come into my home. I know that He would frown on me if I spoke to Him as "you". To me, an orphan without mother, father, brother, Rama is all in all. My mother, my father, my brother—He is everything to me. My life is His. In Him I live. I see Him in all women, and so regard every one of them as mother or sister. I see Him in all men and, therefore, look on everyone as father, brother or son according to his age. In the *Bhangi* and the Brahmin I see the same Rama and to them both I bow.

Even now, although Rama is near, He is not near enough to me; hence the need to address Him at all. When He is with me all the twenty-four hours, there will be no need to address Him even in the singular. No one else addressed my mother as "thou". Others spoke to her in the most respectful terms of address. So, too, if Rama were not my own, I would have maintained a respectful distance from Him. But, then, He is mine now and I His slave. Hence, I beg *Vaishnavas* not to force me to stay at some distance from Him. The love that must be supported by formal courtesy, does it deserve the name of love? In all languages, in all religions, man speaks to God as "Thou".

In Tamil land, there lived a woman saint named Mother Avvai, filled, like Mirabai, with intense love of God. All day long she sat in the temple of Vishnu. Sometimes her back was turned towards the image, at other times she sat facing it, her legs stretched out. Once a pious but youthful worshipper happened to go there, for *darshan*. He did not know of Mother Avvai's closeness to

[1] Devotee and messenger of Shri Rama, in the *Ramayana*

God and, with blood-shot eyes, he rebuked her in words none too polite.[1] Mother Avvai laughed out loud, filling the temple with her ringing laughter. Ignoring his rudeness, she spoke to him and said: "Come, my son, sit here. Where do you come from, my dear boy? You spoke harshly to me. But tell me one thing. In all my long life, I have not found a single spot whence God is absent. Wherever I stretch out my legs, there is He in front of me. If, now, you show me a place where He is not, I shall stretch out my legs in that direction."

The young worshipper was modest. It was because of his ignorance that he had not recognized Mother Avvai. He was scared and his eyes brimmed with tears as large as pearls and they fell on Mother Avvai's toes. She tried to draw back her feet, but he held them in his hands and said: "Mother, I have done you wrong; forgive me, save me!" Avvai freed her legs and clasped him in her arms. She kissed him, laughed aloud, and said: "Tut-tut, what is there to forgive? You are a son to me, and do you know, I have many more sons like you. You are a good son, for you spoke out your doubt as soon as you felt it. Go, Lord Shrirang[2] will protect you. But, my son, think sometimes of this mother of yours."

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-6-1924

102. MY NOTES

A Mistake

I stated in a previous issue that all pupils in the schools for workers' children exclusively wore khadi. *Majoor Sandesh* does not say so; it merely says that many of them have started wearing khadi clothes. The mistake was mine. I hope the reader will forgive this mistake as the sort of thing that happens when one is working under pressure for time. The editor of the *Majoor Sandesh* expects nothing by making exaggerated statements. Exaggeration does not advance a cause, but actually obstructs it. When the desired state of affairs does not in fact exist, it cannot be brought

[1] Only tradition attributes this incident to Avvai.

[2] An image of Rama worshipped in South India; the shrine is at Shrirangam near Trichinopoly. The image is in a recumbent posture and the tradition is that it was worshipped by Vibhishana, brother of Ravana, in the *Ramayana*.

into being by trying to prove that it does exist. The starvation in India is a real fact, and not merely a tragedy on the stage. The hundreds of thousands of skeletons we see in India are the very images of pity. We cannot put flesh into them by play-acting. The struggle for swaraj, too, is a serious affair. We shall, therefore, get only as much as our efforts deserve. Only a genuine piece of khadi sold will put eight or ten annas into the pocket of some poor person in the country.

"Young India" in Urdu

A Muslim friend from Karachi writes to say that I bring out *Navajivan* in Gujarati for the Gujaratis, in Hindi for Hindi-speaking readers and *Young India* in English, but that most of the Muslims, who number seven crores, know only Urdu. Should I not, he asks, oblige them and bring out a *Nai Zindagi* or Urdu *Navajivan* for them? If I do this, he says, the quarrels between Hindus and Muslims will decrease and a strong bond will grow between them. Ever since the Gujarati *Navajivan* was started, I have cherished such a hope. But I have doubts whether such a step would serve any useful purpose. I should not like, knowingly, to bring out a paper which would become a liability. An Urdu *Navajivan* can be brought out only if we secure for it a good number of Muslim readers. I have talked this matter over with Muslim friends and their opinion is against the idea of an Urdu *Navajivan*. That is why I have done nothing. They tell me that most of *Young India* is reproduced in the principal Urdu newspapers.

An Invitation Card

A friend from Akola writes about a gentleman who lives about 20 miles from that city. After the Nagpur Congress[1], the latter always wears khadi. He eats food cooked and served only by a person who has worn nothing but khadi for two years. Now his daughter's wedding is to take place. He looked for a son-in-law who always wore khadi and got her engaged only after he had found such a person. He has now sent invitation cards in which he has requested people to attend the wedding dressed in khadi and explained that, if anyone could not do this and, therefore, did not attend, he would not be offended. We should congratulate this gentleman on his patience and strength of mind and emulate his example if we,too, have his strength.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-6-1924

[1] Held in December 1920

103. INTERVIEW TO "THE TIMES OF INDIA"

[SABARMATI ASHRAM,
June 5, 1924]

Mr. Gandhi was good enough to give an interview to the special correspondent of *The Times of India* this afternoon at the Sabarmati Ashram, with reference to the amazing resolution passed at the Bengal Provincial Conference paying homage to the "patriotism" of Gopinath Saha, the murderer of Mr. Ernest Day[1]. Mr. Gandhi had no hesitation in condemning in the severest terms the purport of the resolution to which Mr. Das and his followers are reported to have given their support, but he was not prepared to pass any opinion on Mr. Das's action unless he knew from him personally what his views were.

My first question to Mr. Gandhi was: "I suppose you have read the Calcutta telegram regarding the attitude of Mr. Das at the Bengal Provincial Conference with reference to the murder of Mr. Ernest Day. There it is stated that Mr. Das and his party, while condemning the action of Gopinath Saha in murdering Mr. Day, paid homage to his patriotism and admired his object which they considered noble and praiseworthy. May I ask if you take the same view of the matter as Mr. Das's?"

Mr. Gandhi replied:

I don't know what view Mr. Das takes. I have seen nothing beyond the Associated Press telegram which you have shown me. I can, therefore, give you my own opinion upon the hypothetical question whether I would approve of the murder by one person of another, no matter how laudable the object of the murderer may be. My answer would be emphatically, no. I purposely refrain from giving you a direct reply to the question put, because I distrust telegraphic summaries of the proceedings of big conferences, even when they are sent by parties who are not prejudiced one way or the other. Unless, therefore, I know what the Bengal Conference has done and what Mr. Das has said, I must decline to give any opinion whatever upon his action. Indeed, when I met him at Juhu he warned me against believing anything that might be said against him, because he said there was a conspiracy against him designed to undermine his influence.

Do you think the Bengal resolution could be justified morally or politically, or by your non-violent creed?

[1] An Englishman who had connections with the Government and, being mistaken for a high police official, was murdered

MR. GANDHI: In my opinion, no murder can be consistent with my own personal creed of non-violence. Whether political murder can be justified morally or politically is a question which everybody must answer for himself. I know many persons, Indian as well as European, who consider that taking the life of a person from political motives is justified on the highest principle of morality. Needless to say, I totally dissent from that view.

What do you think would be the effect of the resolution on the popular mind, particularly on the mind of the illiterate and ignorant classes?

Mr. Gandhi could say nothing about Mr. Das's view unless he knew personally from him what his view was, but if the text of the resolution was as the one shown to him, Mr. Gandhi certainly considered it to be unfortunate and inconsistent with the Congress creed. He agreed also that such a resolution could not but mislead ignorant people.

Do you think the moral underlying the resolution of the Bengal Provincial Conference, if accepted by any political party in India, would be conducive to the interests of the country?

MR. GANDHI: I am totally in the dark as to what the resolution is. The telegram that you have shown me does not give the text of the resolution, but, if the purport given in the telegram is correct, I find it difficult to understand its meaning, because if the action of Gopinath Saha was worthy of condemnation, as in my humble opinion it was, what was the patriotism apart from the action for which the homage was deserved? I cannot, therefore, conceive the possibility of any political party subscribing to the moral underlying the homage paid to Gopinath Saha.

Do you think that the Congress as at present constituted would sanction such a doctrine?

MR. GANDHI: No.

Would you call murderers like Gopinath Saha patriots?

MR. GANDHI: I would call murderers like Gopinath Saha patriots, but not without an indispensable adjective, namely, "misleading". Their selflessness, defiance of death and love of the country, I think must be held to be unquestionable, but on that very account, whilst I would call them misleading patriots, I would condemn their actions in the severest terms possible and I would be no party to resolutions praising their motives. We can only judge people's actions and, if they are bad and harmful to society, we cannot afford to pay them homage for their motives. In my humble opinion, the largest amount of harm done in this world is by people who have good motives, but who do not hesitate to resort to acts

that are bad. It is the age-long superstition that the end justifies the means and it is because I see as clear as daylight that there can be no dividing line between the end and the means and that the end is always the direct consequence of the means, that I am resisting with my whole soul the present system of Government as well as activities designed to beat the system with its own weapons, namely, by means fair or foul.

May I take you back to the days when the political crimes commenced in Bengal? There is an impression abroad that the activities of the Bengal anarchists would have continued but for the inauguration of your non-violent Non-co-operation movement. Those activities, it is said, were suspended on account of this movement, but that since your imprisonment the influence of the N.C.O. movement had diminished to such an extent that the Bengal revolutionaries had recommenced their activities. May I ask if that is, in your opinion, a correct view of the situation?

MR. GANDHI: I do believe that anarchism in Bengal became dormant because of the advent of non-violent Non-co-operation which required just as much sacrifice as any anarchist was capable of offering. I also believe that the signs that we see of a revival of violent revolutionary activities are due to the belief that non-violence has failed.

Have you in contemplation, Mr. Gandhi, any practical measures for checking political crimes in Bengal and converting the youth of the province to your doctrine of non-violence in thought and in action?

MR. GANDHI: I do, indeed, contemplate measures for checking the activities of these misguided friends of mine. I use the word friends purposely, because I yield to no one in my admiration for the spirit of self-sacrifice that actuates them, but I know that their activitiy does immense harm to the country. It can never give swaraj to India even if it succeeds in making English rule impossible. I am convinced that the spirit of India is essentially non-violent and gentle. Violence has, therefore, no atmosphere to thrive in and if God grants me health, I hope to be able to overtake the anarchical activities and show to the anarchists that there is more than ample scope for pure and exacting sacrifice in my scheme for achieving swaraj and that, if they will only give me their enthusiastic support, they will deserve homage not merely for their motives, but also for their acts which can be emulated by the least of their countrymen without the slightest hesitation and without any danger to anybody else.

The interviewer then passed on to another subject, namely, the revolt of the C. P. Swarajists as evidenced in the statement of Dr. Moonje that the

Swarajists would now concentrate their energies on breaking Mr. Gandhi's hold on the Congress and that a fratricidal struggle in the Congress was now inevitable. "Do you think," asked the pressman of Mr. Gandhi, "that Dr. Moonje's views are more or less shared by the Swarajists outside the C. P. and do you anticipate a general revolt of the Swarajists against your creed and your programme of work? Will you, in that event, give up your policy of neutrality towards the Swarajists and start propaganda against them?"

MR. GANDHI: I am unable to say whether Dr. Moonje's views are shared by many other Swarajists, but whether they are or not, I remain unperturbed, because there will be no loss of prestige of either of the parties if only because I do not propose to take part in any "fratricidal struggle". After all, it requires two parties to carry on a struggle of that character, and my scheme of carrying on political work always avoids such friction. I literally mean what I have said, namely, that I have advocated exclusive control of the Congress executives in the interests of both parties and, if I see the slightest desire on the part of the Swarajists to take over the Congress executives, I for one shall not resist the attempt, but let them take charge of the Congress executives. I would then form an organization outside the Congress and invite those who believe in the Congress programme to work it outside the Congress. Thus, in any event I shall avoid a brush with the Swarajists. I shall not need to carry on any propaganda against the Swarajists.

The Times of India, 6-6-1924

104. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI[1]

[*June 6, 1924*][2]

I read your letter to Krishnadas[3]. You will see the article in *Young India*. If the members of the All-India Congress Committee have any faith in the power of the spinning-wheel they ought to spin. I will not allow any discussion on this at the meeting[4]. If my suggestions are not acceptable to all the members, I am not going to argue there.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi

[1] 1894-1951; grandson of Gandhiji's step-sister; secretary, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 1922-23; member, Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1923-25, and later Mayor

[2] As in the printed source

[3] Gandhiji's Secretary

[4] Of the All-India Congress Committee, which was held at Ahmedabad from June 27 to June 30, 1924

105. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

SABARMATI,
Jeth Sud 5 [*June 7, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I had been expecting your letter all along. I hope you are well now. I do not feel the heat at all. The nights are pleasant and cool. Keep up the practice of writing in ink, and write a good hand. Write to me if you want a book or anything else. Regain your health fully. Mani[2] is well. Radha continues to be the same as before. Kikibehn, one may say, is fairly well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Ramdas and Prabhudas[3] have gone to Abu. They will return after five or six days.

GANGASWARUP BEHN VASUMATI
LEELAVATI AROGYABHUVAN
DEOLALI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 443. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

106. AIM OF KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE

I quote the following[4] from a long letter which a friend has written about the Kathiawar Political Conference:

In my opinion, the aim of the Kathiawar Political Conference should be as follows:

1. To take steps in every State to make the relationship between the Ruler and the ruled beneficial to the latter.

2. To take steps which would lead to a closer and mutually beneficial relationship among the States as also among their subjects.

[1] The reference in the letter to the health of Mani, Radha and Kikibehn suggests that the letter was written in 1924. Similar references are found in some of the letters written during March-April, 1924. That year *Jeth Sud* 5 fell on June 7.

[2] Manibehn Patel

[3] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

[4] Not translated here

3. To take steps for the economic, political and moral progress of the entire population of Kathiawar. In all its activities, the Conference should follow the path of peace.

The Conference cannot undertake the burden of freeing the Princes from the control of British Government; if it aims at doing so, the interests of both the Rulers and the subjects will suffer.

The Rulers are subservient to the British and cannot permit the holding of a Conference with such an aim, even if they approved of the movement for their freedom, they would have to oppose it. I, therefore, think that all efforts by the people to that end will prove both futile and harmful so long as the Rulers themselves do not desire their freedom and [are not ready to] work publicly for it.

It should certainly be one of the functions of the Conference to create public opinion against the tyranny of the Rulers, and this is included in the first clause.

Let the people of each State solve their own local problems. But Kathiawaris are all one people and as such have a right to hold a Conference on behalf of the entire population; in fact, they have a duty to do so. Not only can such a Conference discuss problems common to all, it can also interest itself in local issues, form a collective public opinion on them and bring it to bear on the solution of local problems.

I have explained in earlier issues the wider meaning of the word "political", and that, I believe, is the true meaning. The task of making the Conference popular has yet to be taken up. Making it popular does not mean only that people start attending its meetings; it means that they should work for redress of their grievances through the Conference and follow its advice. Before this could happen, the workers of the Conference should serve the people, go into the villages and make themselves as poor and simple as the masses.

We should not be hostile to Indian States. We are not offering non-co-operation against the Rulers. We have not given up the latter as hopeless; I, at any rate, have not done so. I am not ignorant of the tyranny of some of the Rulers. I am disgusted by their uncontrolled and excessive spending. It is shocking that they prefer to live in Europe rather than in their own country. However, I do not blame them for this. This state of affairs is one of the results of the British system. From their childhood, the Rulers grow up dependent on others. They are watched over by British tutors and others, who have orders to train the Princes to behave like the British, create in them admiration for British rule and educate them to like all things British. We see this preference for European

ways among the well-to-do also, and find the same thing on a greater scale among the Rulers. The reason for this love of foreign ways in both is the same. I am sure that if public opinion in Kathiawar, i.e., Indian States, is properly educated, if it becomes strong and fearless, the Rulers will immediately bow to it.

In spite of their many failings, I believe the Princes to be simple-hearted men. They are godfearing, and are much afraid, indeed, of public opinion. I know both these things from personal experience. However, what can the poor Rulers do where there is no public opinion or there are only flatterers among their subjects? As there is no one to point out their failings and criticize them, they give up all self-restraint; they are, moreover, encouraged by the [British] Government in this. Thus, the circumstances conspire against them and bring about their degradation. True, their oppression is sometimes crude and we feel it to be unbearably cruel. On the other hand, the Government's oppression is civilized and is not felt to be unbearable in the same measure. Moreover, in the part of the country directly ruled by the British, one feels secure in the support of public opinion and numerous co-workers, whereas in the Indian States only a few brave men come forward as yet for public work and so it is easy for the Rulers to suppress them. Nevertheless, if a few polite, humble, well-behaved and discriminating men come forward as public workers, the Rulers will yield to them, and they will do this not so much through fear of them as because of their own virtues.

If we start by being suspicious of the Rulers, are determined to speak ill of them and refuse to see any good in them, we will, from the outset, be set down in the debit column of their books. It would then be very hard to get oneself brought over to the credit side.

Let no one conclude from this that I am encouraging cowardice. I am pointing out the difference between arrogance and fearlessness which is at the same time humble. The mango tree as it grows and spreads bends lower. Similarly, as the strength of the strong increases, he should become progressively more humble; he should become more and more godfearing.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-6-1924

107. MY VIEWS

A gentleman has sent me the opinions of a Jain *muni*[1] on my views, and wishes me to comment on them. I give below the *muni's* opinions and my comments on each:

1. If Gandhi's ideas are fully carried out, they will do harm to Jainism.

I am certain that, if my ideas are carried out, they will do only good to the world, and what benefits the world as a whole cannot possibly harm Jainism or any other religion. Non-violence is love. How can a method of bringing about reform through love do any harm?

2. Khadi will benefit the *Antyajas*, but will harm the interests of the Jains very much.

This opinion is difficult to understand. Can there be no *Antyaja* who is a *shravak*[2]? Moreover, the only sense in which the interest of the Jains can suffer is that the business of those of them who deal in foreign cloth may be ruined. If that happens, however, Jains can start some other business. Why cannot they deal in khadi? There are others besides Jains who also trade in foreign cloth. In the last analysis, it is desirable, from a religious standpoint, that a business which is morally tainted should come to a stop.

3. A businessman commits no sin, whatever he does.

This cannot be Jainism. I have not come across such ideas in any religion.

4. There is much exaggeration in the praises showered on Gandhi. It is not proper to attribute to him the virtues of one like Mahavira[3].

I entirely agree. Those who sing my praises would show their admiration for me better if they stopped praising me and got absorbed in doing their own duty. Such praise will not suffer from exaggeration or any other fault.

5. An *Antyaja* remains an *Antyaja*, however much he purifies himself.

This idea has neither religion nor reason in it.

6. Gandhi describes himself as a staunch *Vaishnava* for a reason of his own. All the religions would perish if every one of Gandhi's ideas was carried out. He is a hypocrite.

[1] Monk
[2] Follower of the Jain religion
[3] Founder of the Jain religion

Personally, I believe that if all my ideas were fully carried out, every religion would prosper and quarrels about religion would cease for ever. Who would accept my own certificate to the effect that I am not a hypocrite? The real answer, therefore, will be found only after my death.

Besides these, I have also been accused of much else. I have given above only the most important counts. I would advise the gentleman who has sent me this list, as also others who approve of my activities, not to enter into argument for defending my ideas. In refraining from doing so, they would be putting those ideas into action. Those who accept my ideas and carry them out should keep in mind our rustic saying: "Our interest is in the oil, not in the sound which the drops make as they fall." Moreover, by replying to accusations, we generate ill-feeling, waste our time and arouse passions. We should also understand that we have no reason to believe that the accusations are inspired merely by malice. A good number of those who criticize me believe in all sincerity that many of my actions only harm the country. The right way is to think carefully over the charges made against a friend of ours and tell him what truth we find in them. Generally, a person does not attend to what is said by his opponents but, when his friends point out his failings, he will, if there is any measure of sincerity in him, take prompt note and examine himself.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-6-1924

108. MAHA GUJARAT'S DUTY

This is the hour of trial for everybody. I believe we shall have won half the battle if we could see ourselves, and show to the world, what we actually are. We can advance only if we know and let others know our real worth.

But the individual or society that puts on false appearances deceives not only himself or itself but also the world. There is, at any rate, no progress. The water seen in a mirage can never quench thirst; running after it is only futile labour. Similarly, it is sheer waste of time to try to look different from what we are.

At the time of my imprisonment[1], I saw hypocrisy all round me and I still see the same thing. In order that we may all get

[1] In March 1922

out of this, I want a few things to be clarified at the ensuing meeting[1] of the All-India Congress Committee. I know that the members of the A.I.C.C. are elected by democratic methods, and I have not suggested any change in this. I have only advised a course by following which we may, without changing the rule, ensure that appearance corresponds to reality. This is my reason for advising that so long as the Congress resolution calling upon the people to renounce titles, to leave Government schools and law-courts and to boycott Councils and foreign cloth stands, those who have no faith in it should resign membership of the Committee.

What the Congress decides, we shall know by and by; what Gujarat intends to do we can know today. Every province can, and it is its duty to, make its position clear.

In my opinion, the most important constructive activity is hand-spinning. Those who have no faith in its power to bring freedom, what service can they do by remaining in the Congress? They can, of course, get or try to get, the resolution of the Congress revised. But so long as it stands, they should keep away from the executive bodies of the Congress.

If, however, they have faith in the power of the spinning-wheel, they should study its science thoroughly and see that they acquire the skill to spin the finest yarn. In fact, they should regularly make a gift of some yarn to the Congress. My demand is for no more than four ounces of yarn every month. This quantity can be easily produced by spinning half an hour daily.

The work will not bring the desired result if it becomes mere drudgery. It will be well done only if we have interest in it. If we take interest in it, we shall come to love it all the more. Those who can spare more time need not be content with half an hour of spinning. This is suggested as the minimum, not the maximum, time to be given to it. All permanent committees are executive bodies. Consider what it would mean if all their members spin in this manner. If every town in Gujarat has an executive body, we shall have good spinners in every town. The result will be that in a short time we shall see everybody in the town clothed in khadi. There are weavers in sufficient number; the only difficulty is that we do not get a regular supply of good yarn. If every village in the country starts spinning and weaves its own cloth, think what a gain this would mean. The quantity of yarn spun by one person may not be worth much, but the total quantity spun by the whole community will be worth a lot. Drop by drop fills the lake. If the

[1] This was to be held at Ahmedabad on June 27.

income of every Indian were to go up by one rupee a year, we can understand that its effect on every person individually would be insignificant, but the sum total of such increase has a great potential. What can an ant do? But is there anything impossible for a swarm of ants? The swarm derives its strength from the individual ants. Similarly, the power which results from a whole community taking up spinning derives from the individual spinner. Such is the importance of the spinner. But someone may object: "One person's spinning is of some worth when the whole community takes it up; what good, however, can a few persons spinning in isolation do?" Such a question will be raised only by the ignorant. If individuals do not make a beginning, what would the community do? All the reforms in the world to this date have been initiated by individuals and not by society as a whole. Everything begins with the figure 1. Without it, the rest has no significance. Obviously, the isolated individual will have to labour by himself for a long time. His labours will produce an effect on the community only when it sees his unshakable faith. And the more valuable a reform, the longer the time it takes to be accepted by society. A Herculean task like winning freedom cannot be accomplished with an effort involving no great suffering.

One who understands this will not give way to despair. On the contrary, delay in society's response to his effort will only serve to increase his zeal and his readiness for suffering. How long can society remain indifferent to such deep faith?

At this juncture, I demand from Gujarat persons with such unshakable faith in the power of the spinning-wheel. I hope that, by the end of this month, every active worker will have got hold of a fine wheel and started spinning.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-6-1924

109. *MY NOTES*

The Aga Khani Brothers

My article[1] on Hindu-Muslim unity has called forth an endless stream of comment. Some have liked it, while others have been incensed by it. From time to time, I shall publish in *Navajivan* extracts from these comments, whenever necessary. The Khoja friends have been hurt and perhaps enraged by what I said about

[1] *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure", 29-5-1924.

their activities. They preferred to come and see me instead of writing to me. This, of course, pleased me very much. I could thus get to know their point of view also. They feel that I should have made no comment without having first met them. I explained to them that, in my statement taken as a whole, I had presented both the sides, as was but proper, and, concerning matter about which I had no positive knowledge, I had said that certain allegations were made in regard to some activities. I told them that I would certainly go through the books which I had received and give my opinion on them. If I feel that my informants had misled me, I would admit the fact and also apologize. If, however, I form from these writings the same impression as my informants and I agree with their views, the Khoja friends should not feel hurt. I also told them that I could not accept the view that the Hon. Aga Khan is an incarnation in the sense recognized in Hinduism. Moreover, the way in which they use the word *Om* and the shape they have given to it is, in my opinion, taking liberties with concepts which belong to Hinduism.

They asked me, however, what they should do if they felt about the matter as they said they did. I told them that in that case they should adhere to their views and accept my right to express my views in oral discussions and in my writings.

Moreover, they assured me that no one is ever offered material inducement to become a Khoja. I was very glad to hear this and assured them that I would repeat this to my informants and, if they failed to prove their charge, I would state that, too, in *Navajivan*. Finally, they also said that readers of *Navajivan* were likely to get the impression that the Khojas' belief in a perfect incarnation was of recent origin. The truth of the matter according to them is that this belief of theirs, as also their belief about *Om*, dates back to very ancient times and that they have proof in support of this.[1]

Selfishness

After reading the note[2] in *Navajivan* on the dirty habits of many third-class passengers, a gentleman writes to say:[3]

I congratulate him on refusing to accept the seat belatedly offered to him as a favour and, not minding the inconvenience, remaining where he was in the narrow passage. If those who offered him the seat wished to display the smallest measure of courtesy, they

[1] A literal translation of this part of the article was given in *Young India* under "Notes", 12-6-1924.

[2] *Vide* "My Notes", 25-5-1924.

[3] The letter is not translated here.

could have offered him a seat as soon as he entered the compartment. Courtesy demands that, even if there is no room, we should offer a seat to a passenger who boards the train. The fact is that we have not yet gone much beyond regard for family relationships. We know the duty of sacrifice for the sake of kinsfolk. We may also do something for acquaintances. There is nothing at all in either of these. We also suffer inconvenience for a third category, that of the strong and the powerful. This is unworthy, of course. As for passengers who may be poor, we would even go to the length of pushing them away from the seats already occupied by them. If we wish to cultivate the feeling of being one people, it is our duty to be ready to make room especially for the poor. If our neighbour (particularly if he is a stranger) is hungry, we should give him food to eat and water to drink before we attend to ourselves and we should suffer discomfort ourselves to make him comfortable. Such an attitude, if adopted towards our own people, means patriotic unity and, if towards the whole of mankind, means a religious spirit. Even if we do not wish to cultivate the religious spirit, we should cultivate patriotic unity.

Toll Barrier

Two of the resolutions passed by the Dholka Taluka Conference[1] are worth noting:

From one of these we come to know that a toll barrier is imposed near the villages of Shiyal, Bagodara, etc. This barrier is not to be crossed between sunset and sunrise. The officer who has notified this rule must be either totally unfamiliar with the life of the farmer or indifferent to their feelings and their convenience. In these parts, farmers' movements take place mostly at night. They do not sleep at all after two in the morning. As soon as it is dawn, they yoke the bullocks to the cart or take up some other task. To put up barriers and prevent people with such habits from doing their work is as good as starving them. The hardship must be immediately removed. The Taluka Conference has sought the advice of the Provincial Committee. Before the latter passes any resolution, it should write to the Commissioner to ascertain the position and find out how long it is proposed to retain the restriction. If the farmers have any courage, Shri Vallabhbhai has pointed out the remedy in his speech. But these measures should be adopted only as a last resort. Before any such step is taken, much has to be done.

[1] Held in May 1924 in North Gujarat

We shall discuss the other resolution next week.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-6-1924

110. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Jeth Sud 6 [June 8, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

Someone has sent me the enclosed extract. Please see the portion underlined by me. Is the statement true? If true, who did the thing?

Vallabhbhai, Devdas, Ba—all will leave together, on the10th evening most probably.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G.N. 5732

111. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

AHMEDABAD,
June 8, 1924

. . . Mahatmaji asked me to sit near to him and asked me the purpose of my visit. I joined my hands as I went near him with reverence to which he replied with his characteristic bowing and smiling. Then I told him that I had come for his *darshan* and also for an interview. He gladly consented to give me an interview. The following are the questions put by me and answered by Mahatmaji:

At the outset I enquired of his health, to which he replied that he was getting better. After talking a while on other matters, the conversation turned to the interview itself.

"You did not give your rigid interpretation to the 'peaceful and legitimate' to be 'non-violent and truthful', as you did after the Delhi A.I.C.C.?" I asked.

I may not have made my meaning clear at the Calcutta Congress, as there could not be any interpretation but that, and as I thought everybody understood that meaning.

But then, why do you force that interpretation on others now? He answered:

[1] Devdas and Kasturba left for Bhavnagar on June 11, 1924; *vide* "Letter to Vasumati Pandit", 11-6-1924. In that year *Jeth Sud* 6 fell on June 8.

I do not want to force on others my interpretation of the words 'peaceful and legitimate' as 'non-violent and truthful'. To do so would be inconsistent with my dharma. I had to make my meaning subsequently clear, as I thought it was misunderstood.

In your recent statement, you lay greater stress on the mental attitude and not on the actual results attained, but at the Calcutta Congress you started N.C.O. to achieve definite ends, viz., Khilafat and Punjab wrongs, and at that time, you never laid more stress on the mental attitude. Is this consistent?

I do not attach much importance to mental attitude, except in so far as it would affect the treatment of the different problems.

As regards the Congress machinery, you know that it lays down its policy and chooses its own executives to carry and supervise the carrying out of its policy. If in the discretion vested in the Congress, it chooses Swarajists to carry out its policy, will you still think that the Swarajist position is not consistent with its policy, especially when the Congress knows better than anybody else?

This also is a misunderstanding of the position I have taken. I know it is open to Congress voters to elect whom they choose, but as a humble worker in the Congress and a voter myself, I am exercising the right of free opinion and trying to guide the voters consistently with their programme to choose only such representatives as have pledged themselves to fulfil the programme in its entirety. My appeal is similarly addressed to the present representatives of the voters that, whilst they abide by the N.C.O. resolution, it is their duty either to carry out that programme in its entirety or to resign and ask the electors to choose those who believe in that programme.

If the Swarajist programme is altogether inconsistent with the mental attitude essential to N.C.O., how do you approve of its programme by its success, as measured by its results? Mahatmaji laughed and said:

If the Swarajist programme is successful, I wish to be the first to join the party and congratulate them, and then, I shall pocket all my pride and my mental attitude.

The conversation next turned to Hindu-Muslim questions. I asked: In your recent article[1] on Hindu-Muslim tension, many Hindus think that injustice is being done to them at your hands as you demand more sacrifices from them than their Muslim brothers.

In the first instance, I have not demanded sufficient sacrifices from Hindus. But if they will only sacrifice to their utmost, I would promise not only swaraj within a day, but promise that Hindus

[1] *Vide* pp. 136-54.

will always be in the ascendent and hold the Muslims in the palm of their hands.

But what have you to say to those Arya Samajists who say that injustice is also being done them in your article? They think you have petted and defended Maulana Abdul Bari and Maulana Mahomed Ali and you could have done the same to Dayanand Saraswati and Shraddhanandji. Any special motive in condemning the Arya Samaj deliberately, will you clear your position?

Surely. But I have not defended either of the Maulanas at all; I have said plainly that the reference in Mahomed Ali's Congress speech to division of untouchables was wrong, and it is to his credit that he has made the admission. I have also said that Abdul Bari is betrayed into making statements which cannot be explained, and I have therefore called him a dangerous friend. I am unable to say anything more against either of these friends, because I know nothing more. Similarly, I know about the Arya Samajists' illustrious founder and Shraddhanandji and I have also not hesitated to draw their attention to what I have considered to be their weaknesses. The motive is obvious. I would be untrue to myself and to the cause if I did not say all that I have felt regarding the principal actors, and regarding the principal religions which came into conflict with one another. I am anxious that the Arya Samaj and Shraddhanandji should do much more good than they have already done and, therefore, I have drawn attention to their limitations as a friend and a well-wisher and by no means as a critic. But in spite of this, there is a good deal of perturbation in the Arya Samaj circles throughout India over my remarks. I can quite understand we have all, at the present moment, become very touchy and, therefore, impatient of criticism as intolerance. We have become intolerant of any criticism that might be levelled against us, even though it may be of very friendly character. I have, however, no doubt whatsoever that the storm will subside if I keep myself cool and, as there is no danger of my losing my head yet for a while, I am not affected by all the furious criticism that is directed against me.

One more question about khaddar and I have done (I told Mahatmaji as it was getting late): Is your khaddar programme meant to bring about economic salvation of India, or is it meant to change the mental attitude of the people towards nationalism? If it is the former, then how do you expect swarajya without concerted action for creating nationalism among the people, and, if it is the latter, will the present khaddar programme be sufficient to rouse that feeling among the masses?

The khaddar programme undoubtedly will bring about the economic salvation of India, if it succeeds. In my opinion, no concerted action is possible for the masses without their realizing their economic salvation. Moreover, the khaddar programme is impossible without concerted action. Thirdly, a successful khaddar programme necessarily means the conversion of Englishmen themselves into nationalists, or, at least, impartial spectators of the Indian movement. They will no longer succeed in holding India under subjection for the purpose of her exploitation.

. . . Do you expect, Mahatmaji, that the A.I.C.C. that will meet here shortly would endorse your views as embodied in your two statements and the drastic tests for office-bearers?

It is very difficult for me to say what the members of the A.I.C.C. will do at its forthcoming session. But it will not surprise me in the least if all the drastic tests I have suggested are rejected by an overwhelming majority. I either want a clear-cut majority, which implicitly believes in the programme and is determined to carry it out at any cost, or a microscopic minority. What is intolerable to me is the extreme indefiniteness that overwhelms us at the present moment and makes all real progress utterly impossible.

But in case the opinions of the people's representatives are nicely balanced, for and against your programme, what do you intend doing?

In the first instance, I do not consider it possible that there would be a balance of voting on either side. As a matter of fact, we shall come to a clear understanding without the necessity of voting. But if it does come to voting, and the parties are nicely balanced, I dare say God will give us something or other which will enable us to divide the parties sharply. . . .

The Hindu, 9-6-1924

112. INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT GUJARAT VIDYAPITH[1]

June 10, 1924

SHRI KRIPALANI[2], STUDENT FRIENDS, SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

This morning, I saw three letters addressed to me.[3] One of them advised me to burn the Vidyapith, if possible. The Vidyapith, the letter said, had done no good in all these years. The correspondent himself had been once its student. The second letter tells me that the students are pleasure-loving and indulge their palate in all manner of ways. The correspondent had sent his sons to the Vidyapith in the belief that the students there led simple lives and developed strength of character. What should he do, he asks. The third letter, from a friend in Madras, suggests that in my speech today I ought to give a lead to the whole nation.

Well, what should I do? Which of the three suggestions should I follow? I wish to act upon none of them. Why should I burn the Vidyapith, in the establishment of which I have had some share, however small? There is a story told by an English painter. Once, by way of joke, he hung up one of his paintings in the market-place and wrote below it that anyone who saw any fault in it should mark it with a dot. The next day there was not an inch on the surface of the painting which was without a mark. But the artist said that he would not burn the painting so long as he was himself satisfied with it.

I remembered the painter this morning and felt that he was right. There would be no end to criticisms if we paid attention to all of them. God has made man a creature of attachment. We carry on our work driven by our attachments. On your part, however, you should draw your lesson from all three of these suggestions. The correspondent who has been bitter in his remarks says that neither the students nor the teachers have anything in them. He

[1] Delivered as Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, National University, Ahmedabad, at the commencement of the new academic year

[2] J. B. Kripalani, then Principal of Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, a constituent college of the Gujarat Vidyapith

[3] Here a report in *The Hindu*, 10-6-1924, has: "Since this morning I was thinking of you students, but I could not concentrate on you alone. I was also thinking how best to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. In the meantime Devdas brought me three letters which he said must be read before I addressed the students."

desires that I should publish his letter in *Navajivan* and also comment on it. I intend to do no such thing. Concerning the charge that there is no simplicity in the lives of students, it is for you to consider what truth there is in it. As for the South Indian friend, I shall deal with him. If no one here takes down my speech, he may indeed believe that I did make an important speech.

This much by way of introduction. I have, of course, thought out what I should tell you. I won't say I have not, for it is not my wont to indulge in hypocritical disparagement of oneself. Two years of reflection in the quiet of the Yeravda Ashram[1] have strengthened my former convictions. I do not at all repent what I have put before the country. We established in Gujarat a Vidyapith and a Mahavidyalaya, filled them with Sindhis and Maharashtrians and kept no place for Gujaratis. For this also I am not in the least sorry. It is Gujarat's duty to accept everything good that it may get from Maharashtra or Sind. If Shri Kripalani thinks of himself as a Bihari, let us take him in as a Bihari. He will discover something useful to learn from Gujarat too. If he was a weaver in Bihar, he will become a spinner and carder here and then say that he is as much a Gujarati as he is a Bihari. But it is in your hands to bring this about. Since he comes from Sind, he is our guest. With a Gujarati we can be free in our criticism. But we have given Shri Kripalani a place here for our own benefit and we will, therefore, gratefully accept whatever he has to offer. If I had my way, I would not have any Gujarati, but fill the whole Mahavidyalaya with Sindhis and Maharashtrians. I would ask them all to be like Kaka and Mama. If we could get all persons of this type, what more would we require?

Why did we establish the Vidyapith? We did so to help the Non-co-operation movement. Non-co-operation with whom? With students and professors of Government colleges? Certainly not. Our Non-co-operation is aimed against the system. What is the nature of this Non-co-operation? And what do we expect to gain from it? As I thought about this, two stories came to my mind. One was about a goat and a tiger. A goat and a tiger were once kept together. The tiger was in a cage. The goat was free. It was given good food, it had fine grass to eat. But it became thinner and thinner. A thoughtful man, someone like me, saw that the goat did not grow fat because it was in the company of the tiger. Once it was removed from the sight of the tiger, it danced with joy, even with plain grass to eat, and began to grow fat.

[1] Central Jail where Gandhiji was imprisoned in 1922-24

The other story which I remembered was one written by Sir Narayan Chandavarkar[1], and which I read while in jail. He had once gone out for a walk in Poona. He saw an old woman going home with a lamb. It had been in the household of a big officer and, therefore, had lacked nothing by way of food. But it was not happy there. As the old woman led it away, it was dancing and gamboling and ran ahead of her, for it was going to its home. From confinement it was going to freedom. In freedom alone can any creature grow, never in slavery. This idea is expressed by Tulsidas in his inimitable manner: "For the slave there is no happiness even in his dreams."[2]

Educational institutions of the Government may provide us the best of facilities, may have good professors and big buildings. But the stigma on us will remain. We can aspire to nothing better than service, than clerkship. At the most we can think of becoming pleaders. Or not even that. After graduation, we can only think of a job with an initial salary of thirty rupees. If we rise to become a professor in Gujarat College, that is the farthest limit of our aspiration. In the Mahavidyalaya, on the other hand, the student is knocked about a good deal and learns what he can. One cannot be sure, either, what formal education one will receive. The building may or may not have a roof. The owner may any time send you packing at short notice. Vallabhbhai has to go begging for funds for the Vidyapith. It is doubtful even whether there will be a Vidyapith tomorrow. This is its plight. The sun never sets, indeed, on Gujarat College, but on the Vidyapith he sets everyday and rises the next day. That he should rise and set is the law of Nature in the universe. We want to submit to it and yet survive.

We will assuredly keep our ideal high. That we are not always able to live up to it, that we make mistakes is certainly true. It is also true that we do many wrong things. But, then, we do not try to prove that sin is virtue.

Our ideal is the text: *Sa vidya ya vimuktaye.*[3] Bhai Kishorelal[4] asked me whether we were not misusing this great text by interpreting it in a narrow sense. I must give serious consideration to anything Kishorelal says. His criticism would distress me. I felt,

[1] Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar (1855-1923); High Court Judge, writer and Liberal leader of Bombay

[2] पराधीन सपनेहु सुख नाहीं।

[3] Knowledge is that which leads to freedom.

[4] Kishorelal Mashruwala; constructive worker and associate of Gandhiji; thinker, and author of the book, *Gandhi and Marx*; for some time Registrar, Gujarat Vidyapith; editor, *Harijanbandhu* and *Harijan* for some years

however, that we were not misusing it. He alone who wins freedom in the narrower sense can win it in the other. If we do not win this smaller freedom, how can we attain the larger one? Thus, our ideal is freedom, both in the popular sense and in the real sense of the word.

I do not at all feel unhappy today, do not repent having founded this Vidyapith. If all the students of the Mahavidyalaya were to leave it and join Government colleges, even then I would simply say what fools they were and what a wise man I was. There is no other way for the country to save itself. We do not realize this because all of us are under the power of a terrible spell. For my part, I will go on shouting from the house-tops to the end of my life that there is no way except Non-co-operation for me. When I see that the time for full co-operation has arrived, I will change my tune. But, till then, even if the whole country deserts me, I will cling to Non-co-operation. I say this because I have had some experience. I have spent years thinking before I formed my views. I might even say I have done some *tapascharya* for the purpose. I cannot but argue as I do. How can a man who knows that five times twenty makes a hundred ever say that it requires four times or six times twenty? My stay in the Yeravda Ashram has only strengthened my convictions.

The problem is, what are you to do after your education is over? Shri Kripalani has left nothing for me to say on the problem of a career for you. The main thing, however, is that we wish to learn to shed all fear. If you would have a job, would utilize your education for worldly gain, all right, I say, do it. I shall merely tell you here what a young Englishman does. I do not hate the English. Many people do not know, perhaps, that I love Englishmen. I am not against following their example in some matters. All I want is my own land to stand upon. I may then beautify that land with colours obtained from any source. None of my English friends ever worried what would happen to him if circumstances did not permit him any longer to live with me. These friends gave up their jobs to come and live with me. I had made a mistake about their habits and daily needs, but none of them ever blamed me for that. They knew that I had been perfectly sincere in thinking as I did. Besides, everyone of them was well aware that it was God, not I, who gave them the wherewithal to live. Both the Muslims and the Hindus know that He, the Being who gave us life, will provide us our daily bread. But today the Muslims have forgotten their Koran and the Hindus have forgotten their *Gita*. They have taken up, instead, this worthless science of

economics. They are ever so busy struggling to save themselves from starvation. They do not know that even persons who did not struggle thus did not die of starvation. Moreover, why all this struggling? How to be firm in the pursuit of our ideal is the only thing worth learning in school. In English schools, too, they do not let their pupils worry about their livelihood. The teachers advise them to use their abilities after completing their education and earn their living. And so it is that we see the inhabitants of this small island in all parts of the world. I have many English friends who travel today all over the world. Someone will remark: "But, then, they enjoy the protection of the Union Jack." The Union Jack does protect them no doubt, but it does not help them to win their daily bread. If someone threatens to kill them, then, of course, the flag will go up and the guns will roar. We do not want that protection. But that is not what we are discussing at the moment. Our point is only that you should not worry how you will earn your livelihood in future. You should resolve in your mind that, if it came to that, you would earn your livelihood by doing the work of a scavenger or a weaver, but would do nothing unworthy in your life, would never stand at anyone's door begging. If you have this faith, why should you worry what will happen to your parents, your brothers and sisters? To have light in the dark, it is enough to keep one lamp burning. Similarly, it will be enough if you act like a worthy son, though you stand alone in your family. No matter if you have to provide for your parents and brothers and sisters. Tell your sister that you will eat only after she has had something to eat, but that she cannot have delicacies, that a dry crust of bread is all she will get. When she sees you working hard for her sake, she will not sit idle. She will start working in order to add her share to your income. In this way, if you have courage, everything will turn out well in the end.

And now about those who stand midway between these extreme positions. What should we do, what should we expect, you will ask. Well, you should expect nothing. I advise you to leave the professors when you lose faith in them, when you feel that they have come here to make money or to show off their learning and gain a reputation as big men. Someone told me that I might have no love for money, but I was certainly likely to make a show, for I wished to be counted a mahatma. There is some truth in this. If you find that the professors are here to gain a name as great men, you should leave them. Not only leave them, but speak out against them afterwards to your hearts' content. You are not bound by any contract with them. If, however, the professors are

men of noble character, you should not throw all your burden on them. Knowledge is not to be had as a gift from someone. No person can give knowledge as we give alms. The professors' duty lies in recognizing the hidden worth within you and bringing it out. It is for you to display it to full advantage and cultivate it further. The word "education" also means bringing out what lies hidden. You should not, therefore, worry what you will learn. You should have faith in your teachers and receive trustfully what they give.[1]

It is for you to preserve the purity of your character. The professors cannot do that for you. Always bear this in mind: You do not live in the Vidyapith to enjoy pleasures of luxuries. Your pleasures lie in your studies, in your physical strength and in your striving. You should learn to make use of your hands and feet. Students forget the use of their limbs and then want to build robust bodies by going to the gymnasium. Going to the gymnasium will not make you robust and strong. You should first cultivate a good heart. You will be able to develop physical strength afterwards.

My prayer is addressed to you. What can I pray for from God? I live in His presence all the time. And so my prayer is only to you. You should be worthy of yourselves and your teachers. Our Vidyapith is a model for the whole of the country. Gujarat seems to have made Non-co-operation in education a success. The future alone will show whether, and how far, it has really done so.

I do not want to make any appeal to the professors, as I am one of them. At the moment, the only idea which I want to put before you and which I want you to take home with you is this: whether or not this experiment in Non-co-operation in the sphere of education will succeed depends on you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

[1] The report in *The Hindu* here has: "Trust them, I repeat, have faith in them and do your duty and let your hearts be instilled with the spirit of freedom and nationalism. Thus, illumine the Vidyapith in which you study."

113. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Jeth Sud 10 [June 11, 1924][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your second letter. Please expect only as many letters as you write to me. It has worked out only thus so far. I replied to you the very day I received your letter. I hope it has reached you. Ramdas and others have returned from Abu. I see that the stay at Abu has done them much good. How nice it would have been if you could have gone with them! Now do stay there long enough and recover your health completely. I am quite well. Prabhudas has not yet returned from Abu. Devdas and Ba have left for Bhavnagar today.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI
LEELAVATI AROGYABHUVAN
DEOLALI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 444. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

114. MESSAGE TO SAURASHTRA RAJPUT CONFERENCE

VARTEJ,
June 11, 1924

On the eve of the first Parishad of Rajputs, I wish to say only this much: Begin the Parishad by observing the fundamental truths of religion. You will pass many resolutions as regards your rights, but it is my request that you should not forget your duty. God always gives rights to those who perform their duties with religious zeal. Try to be the protectors of the poor, and in doing this, you will come to know that charkha is their very life. Make the charkhas circulate among them by yourselves taking to spinning. I hope you will today take a *vrata*[2] to put on hand-spun and hand-

[1] The postmark bears this date. The date *Jeth Sud* 10, which corresponds to June 12, 1924, seems to be a slip.

[2] Vow, sacred undertaking

woven khaddar only and this will bring the blessings of the poor on you. I can add nothing to the above.

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-6-1924

115. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES - VIII

Jail Economics

Everyone who has any experience of jails knows that they are the most starved of all departments. The hospitals are comparatively the most expensive of public institutions. In the jails everything is of the simplest and the crudest type. In them there is extravagance in the spending of human labour, there is miserliness in the spending of money and materials. In hospitals it is just the reverse. And yet both are institutions designed to deal with human diseases—jails for mental and hospitals for physical. Mental diseases are regarded as a crime and therefore punishable; physical diseases are regarded as unforeseen visitations of nature to be indulgently treated. As a matter of fact, there is no reason for any such distinction. Mental as well as physical diseases are traceable to the same causes. If I steal, I commit a breach of laws governing healthy society. If I suffer from stomach-ache, I still commit a breach of laws governing a healthy society. One reason why physical diseases are treated lightly is because the so-called higher classes break the laws of physical health—perhaps more frequently than the lower classes. The higher classes have no occasion for committing crude thefts and, as their lives would be disturbed if thefts continued, they being generally law-givers, punish gross stealing, knowing all the while that their swindles which pass muster are far more harmful to society than the crude thefts. It is curious, too, that both institutions flourish because of wrong treatment. Hospitals flourish because patients are indulged and humoured, jails flourish because the prisoners are punished as if they were beyond recall. If every disease, mental or physical, were regarded as a lapse, but every patient or prisoner were to be treated kindly and sympathetically, not severely or indulgently, both jails and hospitals would show a tendency to decrease. A hospital no more than a jail is a necessity for a healthy society. Every patient and every prisoner should come out of his hospital or jail as a missionary to preach the gospel of mental and physical health.

But I must stop the comparison at this stage. The reader will be surprised to learn that the parsimony in prisons is exercised on the ground of economy. Although all labour is taken from prisoners,

e.g., drawing water, grinding flour, cleaning roads and closets, cooking food, the prisoners are not only not self-supporting, but they do not even pay for their own food. And in spite of all their labour, the prisoners do not get the food they would like nor the manner of cooking they would appreciate; this for the simple reason that the prisoners who do the cooking, etc., are not as a rule interested in their work. It is for them a task to be performed under unsympathetic supervision. It is easy enough to see that, if the prisoners were philanthropists and, therefore, felt interested in the welfare of their fellow-prisoners, they would not find themselves in prisons. If, therefore, a more rational and more moral system of administration was adopted, the prisons would easily become self-supporting reformatories instead of, as they are now, expensive penal settlements. I would save the terrible waste of labour in drawing water, grinding flour, etc. If I was in charge, I would buy flour from outside, I would draw water by machinery and, instead of having all kinds of odd jobs, I would devote the prisons to agriculture, hand-spinning and hand-weaving. In the small jails only spinning and weaving may be kept. Even now weaving there is in most of the central prisons. All that is necessary is to add carding and hand-spinning. All the cotton needed can be easily grown in connection with many jails.[*sic*] This will popularize the national cottage industry and make the prisons self-supporting. The labour of all the prisoners will be utilized for remunerative and yet not for competitive purposes, as is now the case in some respects. There is a printing press attached to the Yeravda Jail. Now this press is largely worked by convict labour. I regard this as unfair competition with the general printing presses. If the prisons were to run competitive industries, they would easily be made even profitable. But my purpose is to show that they can be made self-supporting without entering into such competition and, at the same time, teach the inmates a home industry which on their discharge would give them an independent calling, thus providing for them every incentive to live as respectable citizens.

I would moreover provide for the prisoners as homely an atmosphere as is consistent with public safety. I would thus give them all facility for seeing their relatives, getting books and even tuition. I would replace distrust by reasonable trust. I would credit them with every bit of work they might do and let them buy their own food, cooked or raw.

I would make most of the sentences indeterminate, so that a prisoner will not be detained a moment longer than is necessary for the protection of society and for his own reform.

I know that this requires a thorough reorganization and the employing of a different kind of warders from the ex-military men that most of them are now. But I know, too, that the reform can be initiated without much extra cost.

At the present moment, the prisons are rest-houses for rogues and torture-houses for ordinary simple prisoners which the majority are. The rogues manage to get all they want, the simple untutored prisoners do not get even what they need. Under the scheme which I have endeavoured to sketch in its barest outline, the rogues will have to be straight before they feel comfortable, and the simple innocent prisoners will have as favourable an atmosphere as is possible to give them in the circumstances. Honesty will be remunerative and dishonesty at a discount.

By making the prisoners pay for their food in work, there will be little idleness. And by having only agriculture and cotton manufacture, including what handicrafts may be required for these two industries, the expensive supervision will be considerably lessened.

Young India, 12-6-1924

116. UNTOUCHABILITY AND SWARAJ

A correspondent gravely writes:

The very term 'untouchability' seems to my mind to be an anomaly, because there generally does not exist any particular class of people called 'touchables'. It is very rarely that one actually and physically touches another, unless necessity demands it. What is usually obtaining in case of those other than the so called 'untouchables' is that one does not mind the approach of another, one does not mind another passing by his side. That is all and the one does not literally and voluntarily 'touch' another. In the same way, if one minds his own business, allowing the 'untouchable' to mind his own, is not the vexed problem solved?

I am sure you do not want me to go and actually 'touch' the 'untouchable' in order to remove the sin and, if you concede that actual touching is not necessary, what is the purpose in characterizing the evil as 'untouchability'? Your use of the term 'untouchability' does imply that its removal consists in physical touching and I am afraid that orthodox objection to the movement is partly due to this. I do not think that I often touch my own brother and as such it is neither necessary nor expedient that I should touch another man, even if I want to solve the problem; and hence, I think, 'unapproachability' better connotes the state of things

relating to that community. No amount of external embracing will ease the situation, unless the spirit of toleration exists within.

Next, I am unable to understand the relation between the existence of this evil and the establishment of swaraj. After all, 'unapproachability' is only one of the many evils of the Hindu society—perhaps a greater evil —and as long as society exists similar evils do exist, as no society is free from evils. How is this an impediment to the obtaining of swaraj and why do you make its removal a condition precedent to our fitness for swaraj? Is it not possible for this to be set right when swaraj is obtained, if not voluntarily, at least by legislation?

I can very well understand the imperative necessity for permanent Hindu-Muslim unity, as dissensions between these two large communities may be taken advantage of by the Government, who may therefore indefinitely put off granting our demands. I can also understand the social, religious and the humanitarian aspects of the evil of 'untouchability' but I cannot imagine how this can be construed as a political problem, without solving which swaraj is impossible.

I have no quarrel about the word. I abhor with my whole soul the system which has reduced a large number of Hindus to a level less than that of beasts. The vexed problem would be solved if the poor *Panchama*, not to use the word 'untouchable', was allowed to mind his own business. Unfortunately, he has no mind or business he can call his own. Has a beast any mind or business but that of his master's? Has a *Panchama* a place he can call his own? He may not walk on the very roads he cleans and pays for by the sweat of his brow. He may not even dress as the others do. The correspondent talks of toleration. It is an abuse of language to say that we Hindus extend any toleration towards our *Panchama* brothers. We have degraded them and then have the audacity to use their very degradation against their rise.

Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. If the lot of the *Panchama* is not improved when we are all suffering, it is not likely to be better under the intoxication of swaraj. If it is necessary for us to buy peace with the Mussalmans as a condition of swaraj, it is equally necessary for us to give peace to the *Panchama* before we can, with any show of justice or self-respect, talk of swaraj. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork. Hence for me the movement of swaraj is a movement of self-purification.

Young India, 12-6-1924

117. THE ARYA SAMAJISTS

A storm of indignation on the part of Arya Samajists is blowing against me. I have letters and telegrams of energetic protest against my references to the Samaj, its illustrious founder, Swami Shraddhanandji and the *shuddhi* movement. They are from Ghaziabad, Multan, Delhi, Sukkur, Karachi, Jagraon, Secunderabad, Lahore, Sialkot, Allahabad, etc. I omit mention of individual letters. Probably all of them expect me to publish their protests; some have specially insisted upon my doing so. They will forgive me for not complying with their desire. The majority are worded after the fashion of the telegram I reproduced last week.[1] All resent what they regard as an attack upon the Arya Samaj, the *Satyarth Prakash*, Rishi Dayanand, Swami Shraddhanandji and the *shuddhi* movement. I am sorry to have to say that my position still remains unaltered. I have read with careful attention the argumentative correspondence received by me. Those who have attributed my statement to my ignorance have done so probably to leave me an open door for a safe retreat. Unfortunately for me, I have left no such chance for myself. I cannot plead ignorance of the *Satyarth Prakash* or the general teachings of the Arya Samaj. I cannot even say that I might have been prejudiced against the Arya Samaj. On the contrary, I approached it with the greatest veneration. I had, as I still have, profound regard for the personal character of Rishi Dayanand. His *brahmacharya* was an object of emulation for me. His fearlessness commanded my admiration. And my provincialism, if I have any in me, was flattered by the fact of the Rishi being of the same little Kathiawar as myself. But I could not help myself. The conclusion I came to was in spite of myself, and I published it only when its publication became relevant. Its suppression would have been a cowardly omission on my part. Instead of becoming enraged against me for an honest expression of opinion, I appeal to them to take my criticism in good part, examine it, try to convince me and pray for me if I cannot be convinced. Two letters have challenged me to substantiate my conclusion. It is a fair challenge and I hope before long to produce from the *Satyarth Prakash* passages in its support. My friends will not engage me in a religious discussion with them. I shall content myself with giving them the grounds of my opinion.

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 5-6-1924.

So far as Swami Shraddhanandji is concerned, there is no question of substantiating my opinion. My critics will oblige me by leaving him and me to ourselves. In spite of my opinion, I shall not quarrel with the Swamiji. Mine is the criticism of a friend. As for *shuddhi*, the critics in their blind fury have forgotten the qualification 'as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam'. This is quite different from saying that there is no proselytism in Hinduism. Hinduism has a way all its own of *shuddhi*. But if the Arya Samajists differ from me, they may still allow me to retain my opinion. If they will re-read the statement, they will discover that I have said that they have a perfect right to carry on their movement if they like. Toleration is not a coinciding of views. There should be toleration of one another's views though they may be as poles asunder. Lastly I have not said that Arya Samajists or Mussalmans do kidnap women. I have said 'I am told'. By repeating what I was told, I have given both the parties an opportunity of repudiating the charge. Was it not better that I should publish what was being said, so that the atmosphere might be cleared?

Let me point out to my Arya Samaj friends that their protests betray want of toleration. Public men and public institutions cannot afford to be thin-skinned. They must stand criticism with good grace.

And now for an appeal to them. They have almost all entered their protests. I do not mind them. I assure them that I share their sorrow. It pained me when I wrote my criticism. It pains me now to know that it has hurt them. But I am not their enemy. I claim to be their friend. Time will prove my friendship. They do not want to quarrel with anybody or any faith. That is what almost all have said in their letters. Let them take to heart the tribute I have paid to the Samaj, its founder and to Swami Shraddhanandji. I know the purifying work that the Arya Samaj has done. I know that it has laid its finger on many abuses that have soiled Hinduism. But no one can live on his capital. I want them to outlive the latter and extend the spirit of their reform. In spite of their denial, I repeat that their *shuddhi* propaganda savours of the Christian propaganda. I would like them to rise higher. If they will insist upon reform from within, it will tax all their energy and take up all their time. Let them Hinduize the Hindu if they believe with me that Arya Samaj is a part of Hinduism. If they consider it as distinct from Hinduism, I fear it will be a hard task for them to convert the Hindus. Let them ascertain where they stand. I have criticized because I

want them to help the great national and religious movement that is now going on. The Samaj has a great future if it can outgrow what has appeared to me its narrowness. If the Samajists think there is no room for expansion, I shall feel sorry. I ask them, in that case, not to be irritated because I cannot see their liberalism. They should charitably overlook my blindness and patiently endeavour to remove it.

Young India, 12-6-1924

118. NOTES

'Rabbi May'

A most intimate Jewish friend often used the expression 'Rabbi may', to signify that the highest in the land may commit most atrocious crimes, not only with impunity, but may even carry with them popular congratulations for those crimes. The expression may be fittingly used in connection with the O'Dwyer-Nair case. The judge showed bias from the very commencement. Day after day, the report of the case was painful reading for the public. And though the judgment was a foregone conclusion, the public had hoped against hope that the judge would do some measure of justice in his summing up and judgment. It was not to be. The worst has happened. But a British judge may do with impunity what an Indian may have to lose his head for.

By accepting Sir Michael O'Dwyer's challenge, Sir Sankaran Nair[1] had put the British constitution and the British people on trial. They have been tried and found wanting. Even in a simple matter, a man of Sir Sankaran Nair's proved loyalty could not get justice. If Sir Michael O'Dwyer had lost, the British Empire would not have gone to pieces. But its false prestige would have suffered a bit. And were not the British people pledged to stand by their faithful servants, even though they might at times make mistakes, so long as they were in favour of the Empire which enriched them? I know that Sir Sankaran Nair has the sympathy of every Indian in his defeat. For me it was a foregone conclusion. As the case dragged along its weary length, I admired Sir Sankaran Nair's pluck in fighting a forlorn cause. He has provided one more powerful count in the indictment against the present rule which must be ended at any cost.

[1] 1857-1934; judge of the Madras High Court, 1908; President, Indian National Congress, 1897; Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, 1915-19

The Wrong Way

But let us not lose patience because we fancy we are helpless. The Serajganj Conference has given us the wrong lead. I have not got before me the text of its resolution regarding Gopinath Saha. It reads, I am sorry to say, much worse than the wording shown by *The Times of India* reporter. Here is the text. I copy from the *Forward* (4th June).

> While adhering to the policy of non-violence, this conference pays its respectful homage to patriotism of Gopinath Saha who suffered capital punishment in connection with Mr. Day's murder.

I cannot but regard the resolution as a travesty of non-violence. It would have been less undignified if non-violence had not been dragged in at all. The patriotism of Gopinath Saha could only consist in the murder and not in the capital punishment which was the consequence of the murder. He was not out to die, but to murder one who was odious to him. The knowledge that he ran the risk of being hanged made him brave, but not necessarily patriotic. For every murderer knows that he runs such risk and may, therefore, be called brave. The patriotism, if any, therefore, consisted in the act of murder. Now murder is inconsistent with non-violence even when regarded purely as a policy. Non-violent suffering in one's person and violent injury to another cannot both be patriotic at the same time. The patriotism of every lover of his country demands that, whilst the country pursues a policy of non-violence, he does not disturb it by committing murder. And if anybody does, those who are pledged to the policy of non-violence are in duty bound not only to dissociate themselves from such acts, but to condemn them in unmeasured terms, if only because they must, by thus cultivating public opinion against them, discourage such murder. And this condemnation is necessary even though the motive is the purest imaginable. In practical politics, actions count and not mere motives or 'mental attitudes' bereft of acts or results. Had the belief in the policy of non-violence not been reiterated, much of my argument would no doubt lose its force. But I do submit that, so long as the Congress creed stands as it is, every Congressman to be true to his creed is pledged to oppose and condemn in thought, word and deed every act of political violence. I would, therefore, humbly advise the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to dissociate itself entirely from the resolution of the Conference or explain its position to the public, if there

is any explanation for the resolution, which appears to have been carried with an overwhelming majority.

Am Tired of 'Mahatma'

The scene in Serajganj Conference over attaching 'Mahatma' to my name has caused deep pain to me. Those who, out of their infatuation for the application of the title 'Mahatma' to me, either howled down the gentleman who would not use the name or who implored him to do so, rendered no service to the cause or to me. They harmed the cause of non-violence and pained me. What relish could they have in a person using a title from compulsion? I congratulate the gentleman upon his courage in having withdrawn from the Conference rather than use a title under compulsion. He showed, in my opinion, a truer appreciation of what I stand for than my blind admirers. I assure all my admirers and friends that they will please me better if they will forget the Mahatma and remember Gandhiji, as the gentleman in question quite courteously did, or think of me simply as Gandhi. The highest honour that my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the programme that I stand for, or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it. Blind adoration, in the age of action, is perfectly valueless, is often embarrassing and equally often painful.

An Appropriate Query

A correspondent writes:

> You have practically called on the Swarajists to resign immediately from Congress executives. The presumption is that they are in a minority in the country and that the majority of Congressmen, if not Indians, are No-changers. While it is true that at Gaya there was a clear verdict by the country, there was quite a deal of doubt regarding the composition of the Delhi and Cocanada sessions. The atmosphere in the country has been decidedly on the side of the No-changers, but was it not due to a feeling of loyalty to your personality when you were at Yeravda? Should we not ascertain indisputably that as a free nation (free from the obsession of sticking to your views simply because you could not expound your case yourself) we vote for the No-changers or rather against the Pro-changers? Whilst such a referendum is inadvisable till the Congress meeting in December, should it not also be accepted that the strengthening of Congress executives in actually carrying out the constructive programme should be done voluntarily by workers serving under what may be called a mixed jury?

I must confess that there is considerable force in the objection raised by the writer. I fear it is highly likely that the No-changers

voted for the original programme out of loyalty to me. If that is the case, they should now be absolved from the awkward predicament. Happily for me, I have anticipated my correspondent by suggesting that, if the present members of the All-India Congress Committee do not believe in the Congress programme, they should not hesitate to throw me overboard. The cause is everything. Those even who are dearest to us must be shunned for the sake of the cause. Loyalty to it is paramount to every other consideration. All I plead for is common honesty and that in the interest of efficiency. Those who do not believe in the whole programme should give place to those who do. If all or the majority do not believe in it, they should frame a new one, and carry that out. I would not make a fetish even of Congress resolutions. The goal of the Congress is swaraj. And if last six months' experience has shown us a better method, let us by all means adopt it. We shall be truer to the Congress by acting up to our convictions than by pretending to follow the Congress resolutions in which we never had faith or in which our faith has now suffered a shock. If the six months' experience inclined us to the Swarajist view, we should candidly and courageously confess it and unhesitatingly join the Swarajists. All I am pleading against is camouflage and make-believe. It will ruin our cause. If we cannot run Congress organizations without practising lawyers, let us by all means remove the lawyers' boycott. And if we do not believe in the spinning-wheel, let us ignore it. No mere lip-loyalty to the wheel will give us the yarn we want for the thirty crores. In other words, let us do what all successful organizations have done hitherto; that is, to be entrusted to those who must thoroughly believe in them. Orators cannot run an organization whose chief business is to teach and popularize spinning, nor can spinners run a debating assembly where oratory counts for everything.

Another appropriate objection has been raised by another friend. He says my position would be correct if the A.I.C.C. was a purely executive body. But he says it is also a debating and practically legislative body in that it frames resolutions for the following Congress. How can an executive be elected before it knows the laws it is to carry out? The objection is, in my opinion, thoroughly sound. But here again I am safe; for I have simply given my opinion as to how the Congress resolutions can and should be carried out during the ensuing six months. No technical difficulty can be allowed to stand in the way of the Congress work. And if my view of Congress executives commends itself to

the Congressmen, the difficulty suggested by the friend can be easily overcome for the next year by providing for re-election of executives after the Congress sessions. My opinion, in so far as it has any weight, should be treated purely as a guide for members as well as electors. I have been obliged to give it because I shall be held largely responsible for carrying out the programme. In giving my opinion, I have therefore also stated the terms on which my services can be effectively employed.

The Aga Khani Khojas[1]

The foregoing is a literal translation of what appears in the current issue of *Navajivan*. I now invite the correspondents to support what they have written to me about worldly inducements said to have been offered by Khoja preachers to those who would be converted to their faith.

Partial to Mussalmans

The charge against me of partiality to Mussalmans is being renewed with redoubled vigour. My critics say in effect, 'You exaggerate the Hindu blemishes and underrate the Mussalman's!' I gladly subscribe to the charge in a way. If we are to give a correct judgment, we should follow the excellent natural rule of seeing things in their proper perspective. Habit has made us reverse the natural process. We belittle our own faults and exaggerate the opponent's. That develops the attitude of intolerance. If we would be charitable and tolerant, we would endeavour to see our opponents as they see themselves. We shall never completely succeed in the endeavour, but it will give us the true perspective. What, therefore, appear to be my exaggerations of Hindu blemishes are only seemingly so. 'But,' says a critic, 'you do not want us to believe that Maulana Abdul Bari is such a simple child of God as you make him out to be. We in the U.P. find him to be vain, untruthful and unreliable.' I can only assure them that, if I had found Maulana Saheb as they said he is, I would not have hesitated to say so. I have said the utmost. I know against him when I say that he is a dangerous friend. I have not found him to be untruthful. The critics must not think, as some of them do, that I am flattering the Mussalmans for gaining a political end. Such a thing is impossible for me, because I know that unity cannot be achieved by flattery. Cour-

[1] What followed this was a translation of part of the article in *Navajivan*; *vide* p. 207.

teousness must not be mistaken for flattery, nor impudence for fearlessness.

A Mussalman Outburst

Here are some extracts from a Mussalman letter on the Hindu-Muslim statement.

> 'Am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in their attempt to defend their possessions etc.' These sentences are likely to excite the Hindus. I regret very much that you should have written such things. . . . What your writing will do is dangerous to think.

I fail to see anything dangerous in my writing. I should be glad indeed if my statement energizes the Hindus to *defend* themselves in the face of danger. We may not expect unity before we cease to fear one another. The writer has not suggested an alternative. What am I to say to a Hindu who lives in the fear of a neighbour, if I am not to tell him that he should know how to die in the attempt to defend himself against his neighbour either non-violently, by simply standing at his post, or violently, by returning blow for blow? This friend says again:

> No wise man, Hindu or Mussalman, will accept your judgment that Pandit Malaviyaji is 'no enemy of Mussalmans'. He is an open enemy, as open as daylight. I am sure even Hindus will not believe you in this. Lala Lajpat Rai stands in the [same] category with Pandit Malaviyaji. Re. Jeramdas and Choithram you are doing only injustice to yourself. Their conduct towards the Mussalmans is as clear as daylight to every reader of newspapers. Let me assure you that you will not advance the Hindu-Muslim problem by an inch by praising these Hindu leaders and condemning the Muslim leaders.

The Hindu friends tell me that unity is impossible so long as I trust the Ali Brothers and Maulana Bari Saheb. All these friends should know that, if neither the present Hindu nor the present Mussalman leaders are to be trusted, unity can be achieved, if at all, only after their death. The friend proceeds:

> Why do you refer to the Aga Khan literature and *tabligh*? No harm, not a bit, is done by them to the national movement. They are carrying on their *tabligh* in the most peaceful manner. You are referring to the worst form of Moslems' preaching. What about the *shuddhi* movement? You have run a great risk by mentioning that the methods advocated in the pamphlet are extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions. By this you have unconsciously attacked a Muslim State. . . .

This writer's is an attitude typical of a growing class of workers, namely, that we should not speak as we think, but hush up everything. I can understand the necessity of not washing every rag of dirty linen in the open, but we cannot afford to slur over things that stare us in the face and of which everybody thinks. In the heat of his passion, the writer has forgotten to note that I have delivered no attack upon a Muslim State. I have said 'I am told' that the questionable *tabligh* referred to in my statement is extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions.

The writer says further:

> I cannot understand how cow-slaughter and music stand on the same platform. Mussalmans are enjoined by the Quran to sacrifice cows whereas Hindus are not enjoined to play music before a mosque. Hindus have to stop their music before Government hospitals and offices, but their obduracy does not allow them to do the same before a mosque.

The writer should know that Mussalmans are not enjoined by the Quran to sacrifice a cow. They *are* said to be enjoined to sacrifice certain animals including the cow on stated occasions. The sacrifice of a cow is not therefore obligatory. But seeing that it is permissible, it becomes obligatory when a third party claims to force a Mussalman to refrain from cow-slaughter. Similarly, while there is no obligation upon a Hindu to play music before a mosque it does become an obligation immediately Mussalmans claim to stop Hindu music before mosques by force of arms. Both these things must, therefore, be left to voluntary adjustment.

The Bhopal Apostacy Circular

Friends sent me a copy of the apostacy law of the Bhopal State now over a month ago. I purposely refrained from dealing with it, because I was not then ready to publish my views on Hindu-Muslim tension and because I wanted to make further inquiries into the matter. Meanwhile, I have seen Dr. Ansari's note upon it.

Here is a translation of the circular:

> Copy of *Jaridah*, dated, 7th July 1920, Resolution No. 17, dated 5th July 1920.
>
> Her Highness the Ruler of Bhopal has been pleased to order that, in pursuance of section 300 of the Shahjehani Penal Code, Rule No. 1, 1912, that is in the Compiled Penal Code of Bhopal, section 393, after section 393 A, the following be added, which after the date of publication will be in force and enforced:

Apostacy after Embracing Islam

> Section 393A. Any person renouncing his faith after once embracing Islam shall be liable to be sentenced to punishment of either description extending to three years' imprisonment or to fine, or both.
> This order is published for general information and observance.

I do not know whether the dates are accurately given. But assuming the correctness, the law is of a fairly recent date. But whether it is recent or ancient does not much matter. The question is whether it is good law or whether it is bad law according to pure Islam. The ideal before us is that the two, and for that matter, all religions should live in peace and that there may be free interchange among them if the people so desire; in other words, there should be no compulsion in religion. Some of us Hindus and Mussalmans are endeavouring to bring up the practice to the level of that ideal. If, therefore, Islam does not make it penal for one who has embraced it to go back to one's own faith, the law in question must be considered to be against the spirit of Islam and, therefore, it should be abrogated at the earliest moment. I hope that, if the position is as I have stated, the Mussalman leaders will request Her Highness the Begum Saheba of Bhopal to repeal the law.

Liberals and Khaddar

A friend belonging to the Liberal Party writes:

> I have been thinking and discussing the question of khaddar with my colleagues. I find that there is no difference of opinion as regards the merit of khaddar, but the hitch arises the moment they associate the movement for the spread of khaddar with your declaration that it is a preparation for civil disobedience. If it stood apart and did not form an item of the Non-co-operation movement, I think that the support to this propaganda will become wider and more universal.

The prejudice referred to by the writer is as old as non-co-operation. I have tried to show times without number that no one save civil resisters need think of civil disobedience in connection with khaddar. Civil disobedience has no direct connection with khaddar. I have led many a battle of civil disobedience before khaddar was reborn. The civil resisters (say) in the Kaira campaign knew nothing of khaddar. Even Vallabhbhai's band at Borsad were not pledged to khaddar. Apart from the Congress volunteers, nobody in Borsad was obliged to wear it before he could be enlisted as a civil resister. The reason was obvious. It was not a campaign to establish swaraj. I have sug-

gested khaddar as indispensable for civil disobedience or swaraj for two reasons. The first is that swaraj I hold to be an impossibility without khaddar becoming universal in our country. Secondly, it is the most efficient aid to mass discipline without which mass civil disobedience is impossible. Liberals and others should realize that the best way to avert civil disobedience is for everybody to take up the constructive programme of the Congress; especially three items. If all of us worked with one mind to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity and universalize hand-spun khaddar and if all Hindus united to remove the curse of untouchability, swaraj will be within sight. There are some Englishmen who use khaddar but they will naturally repudiate even a suggestion of sympathy with civil disobedience or non-co-operation.

Narayanavaram and Untouchability

The following touching account shows the need for a vigorous campaign against the curse of untouchability:

> With the exception of three streets, *Panchamas* (the depressed classes) were allowed to pass by the public streets. The three streets are the north and the south Mada streets and the eastern street in front of the Kalyana Venkateswara temple. Most of the inhabitants in these streets are Brahmins. The temple lands were cultivated mostly by the *Panchamas*. As the temple authorities could not remove the paddy brought by the *Panchamas* and left at a distant place, they allowed the *Panchamas* to carry the paddy through the above streets and place in front of the main gate of the temple. Then came the informal Panchayat into the village. The Brahmin Chairman cannot but engage *Panchama* sweepers. He even allowed them to remain in the village to cook their food and sleep during nights. One Brahmin gentleman engaged *Panchama* servants to protect him against his enemies, day and night. They were allowed to take their meals and sleep in the Brahmin street during nights. This innovation is highly objectionable from an orthodox point of view. Still no one objected.
>
> Then Mr. C. V. Rangam Chetty opened a Weaving School for *Panchamas* on 9-4-1924 on the main street near Taluq Board school in Sjt. M. Rangaswamy Iyengar's house who very kindly and boldly gave permission. Mr. C. Doraiswamy Iyengar, M.L.A., did the opening ceremony. Two Brahmins who are the personal enemies of Mr. Rangam Chetty started the opposition, engaged touts and organized the meeting of the villagers. In one of their public meetings, they demanded Mr. Rangam Chetty to remove the *Panchama* Weaving School from the village as it is against Shastras for *Panchamas* to live in the village.

When questioned why the *Panchamas* were allowed on three previous occasions, they replied they did not see Shastras then. As Mr. Rangam Chetty refused to remove the School, most of the Brahmins boycotted him, and the Hunuman Library and Reading Room. They requested the leaders of other communities to boycott him. None complied with their requests. The Brahmins then refused to take the god round the streets.

One Brahmin gentleman who collects large sums of money for the Annual Brahma Utsavam festival wanted to see [that] at least the school is closed for the festival. Mr. Rangam Chetty agreed to close the school if the boycott is withdrawn by the Brahmins. The temple Amina as the spokesman of the Brahmins said in the public meeting that there is no boycott. Mr. Rangam Chetty then closed the school for 17 days.

Panchamas freely come even on festival days to make their purchases, to speak and do sundry work if any to their landlords including Brahmins. One *Panchama* student of the Weaving School came one morning into the village and attended the garden work attached to the Library. In the afternoon he seems to have taken some rest in the Weaving School which has no back door. The temple Amina took with him some persons and maltreated him severely and then went to the Library and abused Mr. Rangam Chetty for still running the School. Mr. Rangam Chetty took the party to the Weaving School and proved that the School was actually closed. Some badmashes were then engaged who approached Mr. Rangam Chetty fully drunk. Mr. Rangam Chetty escaped from falling into their clutches. The temple Amina then organized a public meeting, misrepresented facts, terrorized the leaders through the drunkards and made them all boycott Mr. Rangam Chetty. The *Panchamas* were summoned, threatened and asked not to send their boys to the Weaving School. After the meeting was over, stones were thrown on the house of Mr. Rangam Chetty. I hear from reliable sources that there is a plot to murder Rangam Chetty. The Puthur Sub-Inspector of Police came to Narayanavaram and found the true state of affairs. I hear he is contemplating to book some of the ring-leaders. Mr. Rangam Chetty was compelled to leave the station by his friends to avoid murder by the assassins. He is at present in his brother's house, No. 23 Narayana Mudali Street, G. T., Madras. If any protection is forthcoming, he is prepared to go back to Narayanavaram and resume his humble work at his own cost.

It is to be hoped that Mr. C. V. Rangam Chetty will have the courage to return to the post of duty without waiting for protection. God is one protection in a good cause. If assassination came his way, he should gladly face it. It will remove the curse at once, the only condition being that he remains spotless.

Handloom and Heirloom

In sending me some beautiful hand-spun yarn from Assam Mr. Andrews writes:

> This is given to you by the little children of an ashram that I have just been visiting; it is being conducted by Mr. Phookan and his workers, near his own beautiful house. His sister is in charge, and little children are the handi-workers. I wish you could have seen with your own eyes how happy they all were!
>
> There is one striking factor here in Assam, which you most probably know. Every girl who is married is expected to be able to weave with her own hands. That is why you called this land 'beautiful Assam'. In every house there is a household loom. These looms are frequently heirlooms, using the old English word in its literal sense, which reminds one of the days when in England also spinning and weaving were fine arts. Now they have been banished to the Hebrides, where still the cottage looms produce the strongest and most durable cloth known in the West, called the Lewis Tweeds. The spinning-wheel there is worked by the foot, as both hands are needed for the wool; and the spinner sits on a three-legged stool. On my last visit to England, I found one of these old spinning-wheels in a house at Sally Oak, in my own city of Birmingham, still being used by the spinster,—only in this case the 'spinster' was not unmarried, as the old English word usually implied, but a housewife. I believe the days are coming when these forgotten arts will again be renewed in the West, wherever objects of beauty and durability are demanded, just as the hand-press can still produce the most beautiful printing that no machine can rival.

Opium

Of opium in Assam Mr. Andrews writes:

> The curse of opium is very deep on this fair land, and I trust that a full Congress enquiry will now be made into its ravages, so that the facts about the Government of India's opium revenue policy may be placed before the Geneva Convention. Here, when I spoke last night at the meeting, and told the audience that the Government of India declared that the Indian opium consumption was 'legitimate', there rose a laugh of derision from the audience which I wish the Opium Convention at Geneva could have heard. It alone would have convinced them concerning Indian public opinion on this subject. I am quite certain now that we shall have some thorough work done here in Assam towards opium prohibition.

Young India, 12-6-1924

119. "CHHOP" OR SPINNING COMPETITION

A Punjabi friend writes thus about spinning competitions that once were universal in the Punjab and which, let us hope, will not be allowed to die out. The gentleman sends with it a drawing, made by himself, of sisters at their wheels taking part in one such competition.

> About twenty or twenty-five years ago, it was a very common practice in the Punjab among women, in villages as well as in towns, to hold spinning competitions called *chhops*. Women of all ages participated in the general competition. Even small girls with their little charkhas joined as auxiliary forces. The competitors would get up so early as 2 o'clock in the morning and, taking an equal weight of carded cotton done into *punis*, they all sat to work in right earnest, the competition generally coming to an end at seven or eight to enable them to attend to duties personal and domestic. While working the machines with their hands, they sung happy and sacred songs such as the exile of Rama, *virag*[1] of Gopi Chand, virtuous life of Puran Bhagat, the melodious hum of the charkha supplying the music. The healthy and pure atmosphere surrounding the *chhops* can be better imagined than described. Alas, such happy scenes have become now very rare and it is very seldom that one witnesses them.

Young India, 12-6-1924

120. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

[*June 12, 1924*]

. . . It was kind of you to have written to me about Ramdas. I agree with you that he has a modulated voice and can make good progress in spite of his age. But the poor boy has not still found his peace. Had he remained in Bombay in the natural course, he would have continued his lessons, but he will not go to Bombay particularly for music. Will you please accept his and my thanks for yourself.

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, p. 265

[1] Renunciation

121. LETTER TO K. MADHAVAN NAIR

June 12, 1924

DEAR MADHAVAN NAIR,

I am glad you have written.[1] I have sent it to Dr. Mahmud for reply. I am glad my views were liked by the committee.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5673

122. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Jeth Sud 11 [June 13, 1924][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter received today is beautiful. Your handwriting is clear and neat. I would certainly give you 4 out of 10 marks. Prabhudas has returned from Abu. Now none is left there. To-day Radha came here on foot. Let us hope she will recover where she is staying.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 445. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

123. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Jeth Sud 12 [June 14, 1924][3]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I got both your letters. I did not know that you had wanted the proofs a second time. Your first article has already been printed. *Khedata* has been printed instead of *Medata*. Your mother

[1] This letter is not available.

[2] The postmark bears this date.

[3] In a poem about the spinning-wheel published in *Navajivan*, 25-5-1924, "Khedata" was printed for "Medata", a village in Rajasthan. In 1924, *Jeth Sud* 12 corresponded to June 14. *Vide* also p. 245.

has arrived here. It appears there has been some difficulty in your brother getting the job.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C. W. 6010. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

124. SURAT DISTRICT

Two years ago, Surat was the leading district in Gujarat. It stood first in raising funds, first in respect of the spinning-wheel, first in respect of national schools. But today one does not see there as much progress as one would have expected. Collection of funds is slow. Even the spinning-wheel plies indifferently. The foundation of national schools has not been strengthened.

The reasons are not far to seek. The differences of opinion which prevailed all over the country affected Surat also. There is no need to think of the past. The sole question is, what should be done now?

The first task is to take action in regard to the decree for Rs. 40,000 passed against 22 ex-Municipal Councillors of Surat. This decree has been passed, not against the 22 members but against the former Municipal Council as a whole. Nay, one can say that this decree was passed not even against the latter, but against the citizens who backed it and those voters who elected the members. Therefore, the responsibility for collecting that amount rests on the non-co-operating citizens of Surat.

The responsibility of non-co-operators does not end with contributing money. They will surely see to it that the 22 representatives do not have to pay the money themselves. But it is their responsibility to so manage things as to make it impossible for the Government to execute the decree. This can be done simply through local satyagraha directed against the decree alone. That is to say, the citizens should write respectfully to the Government that, if it gets this decree executed, they will resort to total non-payment of other taxes to register their protest. The sum of forty thousand rupees has surely not been utilized by anyone for personal use. The Government may well have the amount realized, but in that case it will have to bear the responsibility of collecting municipal taxes. If there is any difficulty in refusing payment of all taxes, the people should refuse payment only of those taxes which can be justly withheld.

There was a time when we regarded this step as easy. Now that the people's enthusiasm has waned, it appears difficult. But, in view of the recent example of Borsad[1] in Gujarat, it should not appear difficult.

Now a word to the Swarajists. Those of them who have entered the Councils can write to the Government that, if it intends to realize the amount in this way, they cannot continue their membership. It may be said that this is precisely what the Government wants. Perhaps it is. We have only to consider the question of our own duty. If members of the Councils find themselves helpless even in regard to this very small matter, what will they be able to accomplish by staying on in the Councils?

I firmly believe that, if both the Swarajists and the true non-co-operators are reunited, Surat will be its former self again and recover its foremost position. Of course, self-confidence is needed to do so. If those who have entered the Councils do not discreetly get out of it even when they have got tired of them, the old lustre will not return. It is only if we have intelligent, not blind, faith in all the aspects of non-co-operation that our work will shine forth. We should have faith in non-violence, truth and the fivefold boycott. If that is not there, those who wish to work in accordance with public opinion or my personal opinion will only court failure.

Non-co-operation and non-violence have passed the (limited) experimental stage. Now for those who have understood them, they have proved successful in the experiments, and have become principles. Swaraj may be won today or tomorrow, but in their opinion peaceful non-co-operation is the only means to win it.

I have written this much about the calamity that has befallen Surat today.

But what reply will Bardoli give? We thought it was prepared [for civil disobedience] two years ago.[2] Has it become more prepared today? How many workers have been working there? I have heard a lot about Bardoli, but on this occasion I shall say no more.

The report I have so far received from there is not hopeful. Untouchability still prevails there. *Kaliparaj*[3] has not yet secured

[1] In the Borsad taluka of Kheda district, satyagraha was started in December 1923 against a punitive cess and Government had to withdraw the cess in January 1924.

[2] The Bardoli Taluka Conference, held on January 29, 1922, had accepted Gandhiji's proposal to launch civil disobedience.

[3] The dark-skinned, backward community in South Gujarat

the status of *Dholiparaj*[1]. The *Dublas*[2] have not yet become *Sabalas*[3]. Schools[4] have all but closed down. Even khadi work is being carried on perfunctorily. I long to go to Bardoli and ask the people there to satisfy me in regard to all these complaints. My heart holds firmly even now the promise which the representatives of Bardoli gave me, with God as witness. They took a pledge to eradicate untouchability, to uplift the *Kaliparaj* community, to put an end to the sufferings of the *Dublas* and to spread khadi throughout Bardoli. Today I expect Bardoli to say to me: "We had got prepared within only six months of your going to jail. We are prepared to launch civil disobedience whenever you ask us to." I know Bardoli is not quite prepared for this. The question of course is, will it ever be prepared? When will it be? What have the workers to say?

As I was writing this, I received a telegram to say that Pragji[5] has been arrested. There is significance in his being arrested. He has of course discharged his duty, but have the people done so? What will Surat district do?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

125. "KHEDATA" FOR "MEDATA"

"Shikharnivasi", who had sent me *Rentiyano Swadhyaya*[6] writes to say that a "terrible mistake" has crept into the article, "Daily Plying of the Spinning-Wheel". This in fact was a spelling error. Still another was committed through oversight. What I wrote as a footnote to be printed at the bottom [of the song] got printed as an introduction and "Shikharnivasi's" fine introduction was left out. But the error to which "Shikharnivasi" has drawn my attention is quite a different one. In the song *Medata* has been printed as *Khedata*. There is a village called Medata in Rajasthan. I agree with "Shikharnivasi" that this error may be termed "terrible".

[1] Literally, fair-skinned community; here, economically and culturally advanced community

[2] Literally, the weak ones; here, farm-labourers who had then to work like slaves in the Surat district of Gujarat

[3] Literally, the strong ones; here, persons having authority and money

[4] National schools established in 1920-21

[5] Pragji Khandubhai Desai, Gandhiji's associate in South Africa and later a Congress worker in Gujarat for many years

[6] Published in *Navajivan*; *vide* pp. 131-2.

The other errors are of course being noted down. Some day "Shikhar-nivasi" will surely present them to the reader. He informs me that I often use the word *talleen*[1] in the sense of *leen*[2]. Since the meaning of *talleen* is *teman*[3] *leen*, it is wrong to say *gavaman*[4] *talleen* instead of *gavaman leen*. The reader may easily correct this error.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

126. SATYAGRAHA IN PRINCELY STATES

A correspondent writes:[5]

I am sorry if my articles have given such an impression. Satyagraha can be circumscribed only by truth and non-violence. Wherever the two are to be found, satyagraha can always be launched. Considered thus, I believe no contradiction will be found in my writings.

There can be no satyagraha in the princely States in order to win swaraj for India. It can be in respect of local problems. But if there exists even the slightest element of untruth, satyagraha cannot be offered there or in any other place. Even though a cause may be truthful, a person who cannot observe non-violence, who is irascible, who hesitates to tell the truth and who is not ready to suffer, is not qualified to launch satyagraha.

By and large I see that the present atmosphere in the entire country is unfavourable to satyagraha. Jealousy, untruth, violence, etc., have grown rife. Satyagraha has been misconstrued as harassment of opponents. One sees *duragraha* masquerading as satyagraha. In this situation, even when a matter calls for satyagraha, a satyagrahi should act with caution. But in spite of being cautious, if he finds that things have reached a stage when satyagraha becomes inevitable, nothing and no one can hold back a satyagrahi.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

[1] Engrossed in it

[2] Engrossed

[3] In it

[4] In singing

[5] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had observed that recent articles in *Navajivan* tended to give the average reader an impression that Gandhiji was opposed to satyagraha in the Princely States.

127. *TODAY* v. *YESTERDAY*

The same correspondent who has asked a question about satyagraha in the Indian States also writes:[1]

While thinking over this letter, let the reader forget the Bhavnagar Conference. The reference to that Conference here is merely by way of example. I have already stated my views about it. The reason for not holding the Conference in Bhavnagar is what I gave and nothing else. If we do not remember this, there is a danger, while one issue is being clarified, of our getting confused about another.

I for one do not believe that there is any contradiction or discrepancy between my earlier writings on satyagraha and what I say now. It is true that, as the situation changes, one will find new conditions being laid down, but a thoughtful person will immediately see that these are inherent in the basic principle itself. For example, the Ahmedabad session of the Congress[2] laid down that non-violence should be observed in thought, word and deed. That certainly was not a new condition. When it was found that people harboured violence in their hearts and merely refrained from overt acts of violence, then it became necessary to make it clear that a person could be regarded as non-violent only if he was so in thought, speech and action. In other words, if people were told that non-violence for show was not non-violence, this cannot be regarded as something new. The conditions concerning character, etc., are meant for leaders of satyagraha and were always there. We see the importance of character even in ordinary matters, and it should not be surprising, therefore, that in satyagraha, I have never expected the observance of difficult conditions by large masses of people. If this had been expected of them, there could have been no satyagraha even in Borsad.[3] There were only two conditions to be observed by the general public, that they should never use violence in the movement and should obey the leaders.

I have of course taken it for granted that the satyagrahis of Bhavnagar and Vaikom are members of Congress Committees. How can Congress workers be considered fit to launch satyagraha if, knowing the generally accepted conditions prescribed by the

[1] The letter is not translated here.

[2] Held in December 1921

[3] It was undertaken in 1923-24 and was led by Vallabhbhai Patel.

Congress, they do not observe even those? If they do not keep a pledge taken in respect of one activity, how will they keep any other? Satyagraha for swaraj has a direct connection with khadi. It is necessary for a Swarajist to demonstrate that he is one even when starting satyagraha for some other cause. The masses in Borsad did not need to wear khadi or give up drinking before launching satyagraha, but the workers certainly did have to do so. If, now, the Dharala sisters and brothers of Borsad wish to launch satyagraha for swaraj, they must necessarily wear khadi, give up drinking and free themselves from the sin of untouchability. To me this appears to be a self-evident proposition. If we get power without having first persuaded all people to wear khadi, we shall not be able to spread it among the people afterwards without the use of force. In that case, our swaraj will certainly not be true swaraj. Moreover, if a majority of people do not adopt khadi with love, we shall not be able to pass a law for the universal adoption of khadi. From these examples, it will be seen that what seems new is not new but old. It must be clear to everyone by now that there is not a single condition for mass civil disobedience which is too hard to fulfil. But, for those who start and conduct satyagraha, such difficult conditions are necessary and have always been so. An expert musician needs a preliminary practice of years. He should have control over the most delicate notes, and should have the ability to judge whether a note is too loud or too low. But, for society at large, the ability to take up the tune given by a music expert is considered sufficient. A leader of satyagraha ought to be like an expert musician.

Let me explain one thing here. I see it being said against me in the papers that I raise subtle issues on every occasion when satyagraha is started; and that the logical conclusion of my attitude would be that I myself should be there to lead every such movement.

This is a purely fanciful idea. I was not there in Borsad, Nagpur and Chirala Perala.[1] I may say that no one even bothered to consult me. How did those satyagraha movements go on even then? If, however, the person who leads a satyagraha movement without consulting me lacks experience and self-control, he will certainly get confused. But we have now reached such a stage that anyone wishing to do so can start satyagraha on his own responsibility. If I am at all consulted, I would certainly offer advice according to

[1] The Borsad satyagraha took place in 1923-24, the Nagpur Flag satyagraha in 1923 and the Chirala Perala satyagraha, in Andhra Pradesh, in 1921.

my lights, but it does not mean that satyagraha should never be started without prior consultation with me. Otherwise, satyagraha would be a useless weapon. How many problems can I attend to? And how long am I going to live? If satyagraha is a weapon which can be used at any time, there must be, and in fact there are, many men and women capable of wielding it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 15-6-1924

128. TO GUJARATI ARYA SAMAJISTS

I have received telegrams and letters from the Arya Samaj from all over India. I have already replied to them in *Young India*.[1] Even the Arya Samajists of Gujarat are angry with me. I had hoped that they at any rate would not misconstrue my meaning for, I thought, they understood me better. I have already read five letters by Gujarati Arya Samajists, and there may be more. They too have been much hurt. They should forgive me. I cannot understand why they should take it ill if I say honestly what I feel to be true. If we feel hurt every time someone says something unpalatable, how and when shall we learn to be tolerant?

There is little attempt in all these five letters to argue with me. One correspondent has become so angry that he has advised me to commit suicide. He writes:

> Even if, now, the country may gain something through you, it can do without it. Hence, I would request you to devote yourself to Rama's name and win heaven.

Others say that I have always given too much importance to Muslims. Another correspondent has sent me an account of the sufferings of Hindus based on information collected from newspaper reports.

The reply to all this is more or less included in the reply I have already given in *Young India*. Here I need merely add that all this anger proves our intolerance. We still lack the capacity to bear one another's criticism. This is a very important quality in public life. I am certainly willing to make an inquiry into the grievances of the Hindus. I am not ready to believe everything which appears in newspapers, and I advise all readers to discount

[1] *Vide* "The Arya Samajists", 12-6-1924.

much of what they read. If my correspondents see Muslim papers, they will find in them a big list of accusations against the Hindus. What reply will the Hindus give to them? Like Hindu newspapers, these too contain a lot that is concocted. If the Hindus are likely to shed their fear by organizing themselves, I would join the movement. But I understand that it means nothing more than attending a gymnasium. I do not join it because I know that this will not help people protect themselves right now. For that purpose, we must cultivate fearlessness. If that can be developed by attending gymnasiums, let the Hindus start them by all means. I have never said that they should not. I have never run down those started by the Purani brothers in Gujarat. On the contrary, in Gujarat, I have also expressed my approval of them. I have merely suggested that organizing ourselves is not an effective way of protecting ourselves against the attacks of Muslims. Doing that only aggravates the quarrels, does not decrease them.

This issue can be decided by asking these questions: Do we want Hindu-Muslim unity? Is it necessary? If it is essential and if it is desired, the Hindus will have to abandon all preparations for fighting back or will have to pit equal strength against the Muslims, as they would have to against the Government if they fought it, and let rivers of blood flow for securing peace. Even that is improbable in regard to Hindu-Muslim differences, for, as regards Government, the desire is to hate the English and drive them out of the country. This may be possible, since the English do not look upon this country as theirs. If they get tired of remaining here, they may quit. But this country belongs as much to the Muslims as to the Hindus. I believe it to be wholly impossible to drive them out of the country. And so the sole way is to live with them in peace. The only other alternative is trusting ourselves to the mercy of the British Government.

Let us consider what we wish to do. We want to prevent the Muslims from kidnapping our women. Hindus can ensure this only by everyone risking his own life. All Muslims certainly do not kidnap women. Let us suppose some do so in the name of religion. Do not some Hindus kidnap Hindu women? The only difference is that the Hindus who do this are prompted by lust. If we do not have the strength to protect our women against them, who will give it to us? I have already indicated a remedy, effective in the present and at all times, against such molestation. It is satyagraha. That is, to lay down one's life, without killing others in defending ourselves. Even a woman or child can do this. Why do all Hindus not take such training?

In acquiring the power to kill one has to cultivate physical strength, while in acquiring the strength to lay down one's life, one has to cultivate spiritual strength. If only one sees the way, it is comparatively easy to cultivate this. Is it possible for anyone physically maimed to acquire physical strength? Nobody's soul is ever maimed. I can, by calm reflection, acquire the strength to lay down my life if someone attacks my dear ones. But I certainly must cultivate a peace-loving temper in order to prepare myself to do this. I must control my anger and convert it into strength. If I wish to develop such strength, I should not get agitated by newspaper reports. I must go wherever I desire to give protection to people, and be ready to die.

As there can be an army of soldiers, there can be an organization of satyagrahis too. One Ravishankar suffices for dealing with thousands of *Dharalas*. He is still living. If hundreds of men become Ravishankars, they save the weak Hindus from attacks and, in the process, also make the weak strong.

So much about physical attacks. For saving cows, Hindus should never use force against Muslims. They should try to save them only by winning over their hearts.

They should not play music near mosques, as far as possible. In any case, they should discuss the matter with the Muslims and, if the Muslims do not listen to them or apply improper pressure, they should not submit to the coercion, but play music and die while doing so.

Apart from these, the other matters mentioned are trivial. For instance, how many Muslims should have seats in Councils, and so on. I for one would agree to as many of them being elected as may desire to be elected. In my opinion, the question does not at all arise at present. One who has embraced non-co-operation should not think about Councils or Government service.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

129. *VALLABHBHAI'S DIFFICULTY*

Vallabhbhai is up against a serious difficulty ever since I took charge of *Navajivan*. In order to serve Gujarat, he wishes to collect from it Rs. 10 lakhs in my name. He used to take the help of *Navajivan* in this selfless work. Now that I have become its editor, how can I be so brazen as to print in my own paper anything about raising funds for myself? Because of this scruple of mine, Vallabhbhai's appeals have ceased appearing in *Navajivan*.

The problem, now, is this: If Vallabhbhai does not get his Rs. 10 lakhs, he will drive me out and snatch the editorship. If, on the other hand, I publish his appeals out of such fear, I shall prove not only shameless but also cowardly. I cannot afford to give up the editorship, nor to be brazenly shameless. And so I have thought of a middle way. This is that I should clear Vallabhbhai's confusion.

The simple thing is that, if Gujarat wants constructive work, Vallabhbhai must certainly have the money. Some will be ready to pay, if not for the sake of the constructive programme, at least for my name. With that expectation, my name was attached to the appeal for funds. Vallabhbhai needs money, and he does not mind in whose name he gets it. If Gujarat believes that Vallabhbhai has served it well, if it believes that he has embraced poverty for the sake of Gujarat and made others also follow suit, if it moreover believes that funds are not being misused, that accounts are maintained and published, if it believes that, however difficult the task which the Gujarat Vidyapith has undertaken, the work it is doing is valuable and also that, through it, thousands of children are being trained for swaraj, that khadi is being popularized and the cause of the *Antyajas* is being served—if the Gujaratis believe all this, they will put Rs. 10 lakhs into the Gandhi purse, that is, the Swaraj purse or the purse for the poor. According to the saying, "A dancer who does not wish to dance finds fault with the floor", anyone can trot out the excuse of trade being bad, etc., etc. Despite poor business, we do eat and drink, celebrate weddings, and so on; let us, then, help this essential national work as well. If every Gujarati understands that it is his job to steer the Congress ship in Gujarat, he should donate "a petal if not a flower" to the purse and help Vallabhbhai out of his difficulty.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

130. "A BUFFALO FOR A THONG"[1]

A friend has sent me a pamphlet entitled *Lakshmino Vinash*[2]. It bears the name neither of the publisher nor of the printer. It is being distributed gratis. The writer's object is to get people to buy his books. But, for such a paltry object, he has attacked Muslims. I quote a few samples: "The Muslims are barbarians." "What sort of men are these whom we help and support? They sever the necks of cocks, goats and cows." "Why do you show consideration for those from whose hands you cannot even accept water to drink?" "Why do you buy your books from Muslims?" "Yours is a religion of compassion, that of the barbarians is steeped in sin." There are more such intolerant statements. My name, too, has been misused. I hope that no Hindu will touch this pamphlet. I hope further that the writer will himself atone for having violated the religion of compassion which he claims to follow and throw his pamphlet into the fire.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

131. TO WORKERS

I have quoted these passages[3] from a correspondent's letter, omitting some adjectives for the sake of brevity. I simply do not have the time to meet every worker in private. But I invite all those who have any special information in their possession to communicate to me in private their facts and suggestions. Many who write to me have a handwriting worse even than mine. I request them to write legibly, out of kindness to me if for no other reason. Some write long prefaces. One sees their point only after going half way through their letters. I suggest that they drop the prefaces. Some put it as you like—adorn or ruin their letters with adjectives. I advise them to omit them. I should like to receive letters of this type :

[1] Gujarati saying implying that one does not kill a buffalo for the sake of a little strip of leather

[2] Destruction of wealth

[3] Not translated here. The correspondent had suggested that, before resuming his work in Gujarat, Gandhiji should fully acquaint himself with the real state of affairs.

"With reference to your request in the *Navajivan* of 15-6-1924, I have given up Congress work since A, B, or C, with whom I used to work, did this wrong thing at such and such a time, or, since I could not at all agree with the views of A, B, or C, or, since they treated me in this manner, or, since my views have changed. I have lost faith in non-violence or truth or the spinning-wheel. Personally, I suggest that work will proceed well only if the Committee carries out these reforms, gives up these activities or removes these workers."

It would help if I receive letters giving such straightforward facts. It is against public interest, in my opinion, to keep back anything in public life. However, those who know me know that I never publish names, nor preserve letters. I have destroyed even very important letters. I try to preserve only letters of public interest. However, I do not wish to receive a single letter with the proviso that I should not make any use of the communicated facts, for I have no desire to know anything which cannot be used. Let no one write anonymous letters either. I still receive such letters. The letter from which I have quoted suggests that our public life has not yet become clean. From that point of view, our movement of non-co-operation should be considered to have failed; in any case, its success should be measured only by the degree of purity it has brought about in our public life. We are opposing the present system of Government because we are convinced that it is evil. That necessarily means that, comparatively speaking, we are pure and wish to establish a pure administration. Our public life, therefore, should be pure, so pure indeed that even our opponents should see and acknowledge it. The very movement of non-co-operation means turning our enemy into a friend. One who has no faith in this principle can never become a peaceful non-co-operator.

It is also necessary to think about one drawback of ours. We are much too eager to see faults in others, especially in our co-workers, and never see the good in them. Consequently, we are always finding fault with people. A worker may be doing much work; but, if he gets a little angry or speaks rudely, we begin to think low of him. If he does not receive us well or does not understand our point of view, we ignore all his services. I have had much experience of persons with such temper and so wish to caution people also against the habit of always criticizing others.

In placing both the sides before the reader, my purpose is to ensure that those who see only good observe things carefully and admit any evil which may be present, and those who see only evil

try to observe the good as well; if, afterwards, such persons write to me objectively, the information in their letters may prove useful.

Finally, I must also state that I have no desire to be captain of the ship. In Vallabhbhai we have the captain. All I can do is to advise and guide. I already have the work of editing *Young India* and *Navajivan*. That job is quite enough for me. If people oblige me to give it up, I shall have the work of Ashram. At present, I am not fit even for that, as these two journals leave me no time for anything else at all. It is only as an adviser that I can be of service to Gujarat and the country. Letters giving detailed information help me very much in forming my opinion.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

132. A NOTE

False Notion

"You and I have had our pleasure of wearing fine clothes and now wear khadi; if, however, we clothe these delicate children in khadi, the poor things will never know the pleasure of wearing other clothes."

This is what many elderly persons, looking at their grandsons, say to the latter's father and this is their way of showing their love for the little ones. Writing in this strain, a gentleman asks what he should do in this predicament. I for one see no great difficulty here at all. By surrendering ourselves to such inordinate love of our elders, why should we compromise the future of our children or harm the great fight to banish starvation from India? How can we, succumbing to such sentiment, give up what we consider to be our duty? Moreover, it is merely a false notion that mill-cloth, whether foreign or Indian, is better than other cloth because it is fine! Today there are many children who will not touch fine cloth and will wear only khadi. Children form such habits as we let them form. It is difficult to understand what pleasure there is in wearing mill-cloth. After some years, when everyone will be wearing khadi and nothing else, we shall come to believe that there is pleasure in khadi. On the little bodies of innocent children dyed clothes which stick to the body and which are often dirty never look so well as milk-white khadi. Moreover, in the climatic conditions of our country, the fewest clothes are best for us. For our children, shoes, socks, and too many clothes are a source of disease. To make them wear these things is the surest way of making them delicate and is needless expenditure besides. How

strange it is that we shower the wrong kind of love on our children and, right from the beginning, give them wrong education!

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-6-1924

133. LETTER TO NAVINCHANDRA

Jyeshtha S. 14, 1980 [*June 16, 1924*]

What should I do to put into practice the highest ideal of life? This is the question. Think a little and you will find the answer implicit in the question itself. If someone asks you what he should do if he wanted to eat something that he relished, you will answer, "Eat it." Similarly putting the idea into practice teaches us what we should do. The real difficulty is in regard to our loving the ideal. We often believe that we like a certain thing, but in reality we do not. If truth is our ideal, we should practise truth. If *brahmacharya* is our ideal, we must find pleasure in its observance. If body labour is the ideal, we should find pleasure in spinning, carding, weaving. If service be your ideal, never be tired of rendering service. If we want to serve through teaching, we must each to the best of our ability.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 2170

134. NOTE ON J. B. PETIT'S LETTER

[After *June 17, 1924*][1]

Show this to Benarasidas and let him say who told him that Mr. Petit had promised a part of the money asked.

From a photostat: S.N. 9978

[1] This was scribbled on the following letter dated August 17, 1924, from J. B. Petit: "I do not remember ever having undertaken to pay even a part of Pandit Banarasi Dass's salary and expenses. A letter from Pandit Banarasi Dass asking for such help was placed before the Committee of the I.I.C.A., I believe, more than a year ago and was turned down. The Committee wanted Mr. Banarasi Dass to be a whole-time Officer of the Association, but on the latter expressing his inability to do so, his application for help was rejected. I do not think the Committee will therefore sanction anything towards his expenses; but if you wish me to place the letter before it again for its consideration, I shall be glad to do so, hearing from you." *Vide* also "Letter to K. Natarajan", 15-8-1924.

135. TELEGRAM TO GANGADIN CHAVNIVALA[1]

[On or before *June 18, 1924*]

THEY MAY. IF THEY TRY THEY CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY PUSH KHADDAR.

The Hindu, 19-6-1924

136. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Jeth Vad 1 [*June 18, 1924*][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I cannot give 4 marks for your handwriting today. You ought to improve your handwriting every day. You should keep the printed alphabet always before you. If you have not taken a copy book with you, I shall send you one. Ba and Devdas have returned. Today they will go to Surat to give a send-off to Pragji who is going to jail. I believe you have read about his having been arrested. We had a drizzle here also. We shall have some relief if there is a shower.

Your English handwriting is fairly good. But you can improve here too. I write this not to shame but to encourage you.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI
LEELAVATI SANATORIUM
DEOLALI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 446. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] This was in reply to a telegram asking whether Non-co-operators should enter the Cantonment Boards.

[2] The postmark bears this date.

137. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

Jeth Vad 1 [*June 18, 1924*][1]

DEAR FRIEND,

I am writing this to you about the suit that is going on between Babusaheb (Yashavantprasad), Veerubhai and Dinkarrao. I knew about the case only after Veerubhai and Markandarai came to me. Veerubhai and Babusaheb are ready to refer the case to arbitration but no one knows about Dinkarrao's attitude. Can you not get all the parties together and persuade them to settle their differences through arbitration and stop the family quarrel from going to the court? There is one suit due for hearing on the 25th at Bhavnagar. Please do whatever you can before that date. You are much closer to this family than I. Hence it is not for me to recommend anything to you. Since you are a Government official, someone has to approach you. You may take it that I have approached you on behalf of all the three.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3180. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

138. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

June 18, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Really, you are wonderful. Your Gujarati letters far surpass your English letters. It is you I meet in your Gujarati letters; in your English letters I used to be captivated by your English language.

Today you see the thread of yarn from the charkha coming between you and God; but on this very thread you will see Him dancing. Wherever faith is He is.

If despite your age the rains did not bring you cold, it is, first, because you are growing young and, second, because you labour

[1] In his letter to the addressee dated July 3, 1924, Gandhiji refers to Dinkarrao mentioned in this letter. It is likely that this letter was also written in 1924, in which year *Jeth Vad* 1 fell on June 18.

in service. He would be no God if He does not protect from harm those who go out to do His work in His name.

Please pass on to Mrs. Abbas, Rehana and other members of the family your zeal for the charkha.

I grant you pardon in advance for any number and any kind of letters you may write.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9547

139. NOTES

VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

His Holiness Sri Narayan Guru, spiritual leader of the Tiyas[1], is reported to have disapproved of the present methods of satyagraha at Vaikom. He suggests that volunteers should advance along barricaded roads and scale the barricades. They should enter temples and sit with others to dine. Though I have compressed the interview, I have reproduced almost the exact words.

Now the action proposed is not satyagraha. For scaling barricades is open violence. If you may scale barricades, why not break open temple doors and even pierce through temple walls? How are volunteers to pierce through a row of policemen except by using physical force? I do not for one moment suggest that by the methods proposed the Tiyas, if they are strong and are willing to die in sufficient numbers, cannot gain their point. All I submit is that they will have gained it by something the reverse of satyagraha; and then, too, they would not have converted the orthodox to their view, but would have imposed it on them by force. A friend who has sent me the press cutting recording the interview suggests that, by reason of the violent advice of the guru, I should ask the local Congress committee to call off satyagraha. I feel that would mean want of faith in one's means and surrender to violence. So long as the organizers strictly keep within the limits which they have prescribed for themselves, there is no cause for calling off satyagraha. The friend cites Chauri Chaura as an illustration. In doing so, he has betrayed confusion of thought or ignorance of facts. The Bardoli satyagraha was suspended because Congress and Khilafat men were implicated in the

[1] Community in Kerala

Chauri Chaura outrage. If Congressmen connected with the Vaikom movement entertain the suggestions said to be favoured by the Tiya spiritual leader, there would be a case for penance and, therefore, suspension, but not otherwise. I would, therefore, urge the organizers at Vaikom to make redoubled efforts and, at the same time, keep stricter watch on the conduct of those who take part in the movement. Whether it takes long or short to reach the goal, the way is the way of peaceful conversion of the orthodox by self-suffering and self-purification and no other.

Meaning of 'Untruthful'

A Swarajist friend writing from Simla about the use of the adjectives 'violent' and 'untruthful' in my recent writings says:

> You mean those who are 'untrue' to the triple boycott. May I suggest most respectfully to explain that observation, by the way, in one of your notes? As it has pained some prominent friends here, so must it have pained others elsewhere. I have understood it in the light in which I have interpreted it above. But I believe, especially when you will be the last man in the world to be misunderstood, a reference in one of your notes will not be futile.

Had not the friend kindly drawn my attention to the misunderstanding, I should never have known its existence. The whole of my recent writings have been directed to the untruthful atmosphere that surrounds us. My criticism is all-inclusive. I know No-changers who do not enforce in their own persons the khaddar resolution. Their action is, in my opinion, decidedly untruthful. When we do not believe in the boycott of law-courts and still pretend as if we did, our attitude is untruthful. Many of us do not believe in non-violence in thought, word, and deed, and still profess to subscribe to the policy of non-violence. We are untruthful whether we are Pro-changers or No-changers.

Special Session?

I note that Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya[1] has given notice of intention to move at the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. a resolution for a special session of the Congress. There is hardly any case for a special session. The Congress resolutions are there. There should be no difference of opinion as to their meaning. Even if there is, parties may agree to differ and set to work. All that is required is for the members to decide upon the method of work

[1] 1880-1959; physician and public worker; President of the Indian National Congress, 1948; author of *History of the Indian National Congress*

during the next six months. Policies may be determined at the Congress session. The special session will not help us to remove our indecision, indifference or inertia. I feel sure that these would persist so long as each party continues to accuse the other of retarding the progress of the country. In my opinion, nobody retards it who acts to the best of his lights. But he does retard it who is too lazy to think and act for himself, or too timid to do so lest he may give offence. We must dare to say 'no' even if it wounds.

Inflammatory Literature

A friend has sent me a pamphlet called *Rangila Rasul*, written in Urdu. The author's name is not given. It is published by the manager, Arya Pustakalaya, Lahore. The very title is highly offensive. The contents are in keeping with the title. I cannot without giving offence to the reader's sense of the fine give the translation of some of the extracts. I have asked myself what the motive possibly could be in writing or printing such a book except to inflame passions. Abuse and caricature of the Prophet cannot wean a Mussalman from his faith and it can do no good to a Hindu who may have doubts about his own belief. As a contribution, therefore, to the religious propaganda work, it has no value whatsoever. The harm it can do is obvious.

Another friend sends me a sheet called *Shaitan* printed at Public Printing Press, Lahore. It contains untranslatable abuse of Mussalmans. I am aware of similar abuse by Mussalman sheets. But that is no answer to or justification for the Hindu or the Arya Samaj abuse. I would not have even noticed these prints but for the information given to me that such writings command a fair patronage. The local leaders must find a way of stopping these publications or, at least, discrediting them and distributing clean literature instead, showing tolerance for each other's faiths.

Three Against One

A Mussalman friend writes to say that, whilst the Bhopal State apostasy law is undoubtedly bad, the agitation against it is not genuine. He says the law is old and has never been enforced. He contends that the Hindus in that State have been most justly treated and have often occupied posts of the highest responsibility. 'But,' says the friend, 'do you know what is happening in the Hindu States of Palol, Rewa and Bharatpur? Palol you mentioned yourself. In Bharatpur already three mosques have been demolished. The order of Rewa is said to be that, if a Hindu becomes a Mussalman, he will be awarded one year's imprisonment

and the man who converts him to Islam will get two years'. If the facts are as set forth, Hindus have little reason to complain of a law that is a dead letter. Personally, I think that on the principle that two wrongs do not make one right, the wrong must be condemned wherever it exists. Wherever conversion is punishable by law, it is a token of intolerance which must be rooted out. But the first appeal of Hindus must be to the Hindu States.

Kenya Indians

The Kenya Indians are continuing their brave fight in the face of heavy odds. Messrs Goolam Hoosen Aladina, Ahmedbhai Karim, Valibhai Ismail, and Kasim Noor Mahomed, together with many others, are already in jail. And now comes the news that Mr. Desai too shares the same honours. The Kenya Indians deserve congratulations for sustaining the fight. But the law chosen for civil disobedience affects only a limited number of Indians. The penalty imposed is slight. If, therefore, our countrymen in Kenya are intent upon carrying on the struggle till justice is done to them, they will have to find other State-made unmoral laws for civil disobedience, such as will enable a larger number, if they are willing, to offer battle and to undergo a stronger course of suffering. The Kenya Committee that is now sitting in London may give them temporary relief. Public agitation here may encourage them. But the real remedy lies with them. They should remove every cause of legitimate complaint against them and, at the same time, by offering civil disobedience prove their courage for prolonged suffering in a common cause. Then success is a certainty.

Value of Silent Work

Borodada (Dwijendranath Tagore) sends the following hopeful note:

> The following has come to my mind like a flash of lightning. How great a value a simple good work has when done silently before the all-seeing eye of God seems to me to be unknown to the generality of men of our present generation. Most people, who are worthy in other respects, place an undue value on the high-sounding names of things and persons, disregarding altogether their real import. Are the *rishis* of ancient India less of *rishis* because their names are unknown to the superficial histories of modern times? When will the eyes of our understanding be opened to this simple and soul-satisfying truth that mere names are words echoed from mouth to mouth signifying nothing? How many people pay homage to the name of Shakespeare without ever having opened a single book of Shakespeare? How many people bow to the

> name of Christ with the appearance of sincere reverence, whose daily life throws to the dogs every word of Christ spoken in love to all humanity irrespective of caste and creed? I am perfectly sure that each good work, however insignificant in appearance, will bear tenfold fruit in comparison to the grandiloquent and pompous works performed mostly with a view to acquire *names* in history. It is obvious that if we want to gain success in this great movement which Providence has placed in our hands without our asking, we must concentrate all our efforts on the real work we have to do, and totally cut off all connection with those names of things and persons which exert undue influence over our untutored minds and which 'hover through the midnight air' of our ignorance (of *avidya*) like the witches of Macbeth. The name of non-co-operation may shock the prejudiced ear of a student of the abstract ethics of the schools, while the *thing* non-co-operation is the best medicine for the cure of our mad endeavour after the attainment of all the nourishment that bread can give from the stones thrown at us in mockery by the well-fed and well-clothed house holder at whose door we stand begging, in our present half-starved and ragged condition, to be allowed the privilege of co-operating with him, on equal terms, with regard to the right distribution of food and clothing amongst us for our mutual benefit.

I wish every worker will treasure the beautiful thought contained in Borodada's note and believe with him that all true work will abide when names will have been forgotten.

1814 AND 1914

Babu Kshitish Chandra Dasgupta of the Khadi Pratishthan says that in 1814 two crores (now equal to twelve crores) of rupees worth of khadi was exported from Calcutta alone. In 1914 India *imported* sixty-six crores of rupees worth of piece-goods. No wonder that we have become a nation of paupers. We would not be so badly off if we had given up the spinning and the weaving industry in exchange for another. That we could not do because the national industry was deliberately killed and no other was substituted by its murderers.

CHARKHA IN TRIVANDRUM JAIL

Mr. K. Kumar, a satyagrahi prisoner in the Central Jail at Trivandrum, says:

> This is one of the happiest days in my life being the day of my arrest and imprisonment (after one month) . . . I send you the product of the hours of silent spinning We have the charkha working here

almost from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. . . . I spin not less than three hours daily. . . . Some of us are learning Hindi or Urdu, we read the *Gita* and the *puranas* . . . we have prayers at 6 p.m. which are attended by all without distinction of caste or creed. . . . The officials show us every consideration.

Young India, 19-6-1924

140. *ARYA SAMAJISTS AGAIN*

So many Arya Samajists have written such long dissertations on my (in their opinion) ignorance of Arya Samaj teachings and their excellence that I was anxious to publish at least one of them so that the reader might have the Arya Samajists' view of my comments. At last I have a letter which it gives me pleasure to publish. It is from Principal Ramdeva of Kangri Gurukul. I have taken the liberty of removing only one passage which, in my opinion, must have been written in haste and does not do him justice. It does not affect his argument and certainly takes nothing away from his passionate exaltation of the founder of the Samaj. Here is Principal Ramdeva's letter:

I was deeply pained to read your article on Hindu-Muslim Unity in *Young India*. I have never in my life read an article so disappointing from the pen of one so great. The article has caused deep resentment and heart-burning in the Punjab and the U.P. Instead of easing the situation, it has inflamed the Hindu mind and led many thinking people among the Aryas to the conclusion that you are so much biased in favour of Islam and against the Arya Samaj that you cannot help rendering—though quite unconsciously—a grave injustice to the latter. Your attacks upon the metaphysical beliefs of the Arya Samaj were quite irrelevant and had no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim question. They were not well reasoned out and you are in no mood for a metaphysical discussion. The Arya Samajists' belief in the plenary inspiration of the Veda has as little connection with Hindu-Muslim tension as your belief in metempsychosis has with the split in the Congress. . . . Besides, if belief in verbal inspiration makes for narrowness, Islam is just as narrow as the religion of the Vedas. For this belief formed an essential part of the Muslim creed even in the palmy days of the Mohammedan faith on which you dwell with such fervent enthusiasm. Your implication that Maharshi Dayanand was the first sage to proclaim the doctrine of Vedic infallibility is absolutely without any foundation in fact and only reveals the dangers of dealing with subjects which a man—however great he may be—has not

studied. May I respectfully point out that the Upanishads, the *Manusmriti*, the six systems of philosophy, the *puranas* and the works o, Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Chaitanya and other mediaeval saints and scholars all preach this doctrine? Again, the view that the Vedas contain the germs of all true knowledge including physical science is by no means new, all ancient scientists—like Arya Bhatta, Bhaskaracharya—held it. Besides, modern Vedic scholars like Pavgee, Paramashiva Iyer, Dwijdass Datta—none of whom is an Arya Samajist—have independently arrived at the same conclusion. I wonder if you know that Aravind Ghosh has publicly declared that Swami Dayanand alone had discovered the right axioms of Vedic exegesis. The testimony of such eminent authorities—who devoted their lifetime to the study of the Vedas—cannot be discredited by the mere *ipse dixit* of a Mahatma—however lofty his character and however great and overflowing his love for his kind—who has not devoted even five consecutive years to the study of the Vedas and the Vedangas in the original. I am afraid you were ill-advised in venturing into the field of theological polemics while writing as the supreme political leader of men of all faiths and creeds. Your characterization of the *Satyarth Prakash* is most unfair. It seems you have not read the first ten chapters which deal with prayer, *brahmacharya*, pedagogics, marriage reform, sannyas, politics, salvation, knowledge and nescience, Vedas and vegetarianism and form the main book—these chapters do not, as a rule, touch upon other religions—and have only skipped over the four supplementary chapters. In fact, you had by means of the mysterious stirrings of your subliminal consciousness, arrived at the queer conclusion that Swami Dayanand was intolerant, long before you had glanced at the *Satyarth Prakash* and your hurried reading was vitiated by your preconceptions. You were in the position of a judge who pronounced his sentence after hearing the prosecution and then addressed himself to defence evidence in order to be able to write out a judgment in support of the sentence. Men who have read Dayanand's works carefully—your friend Andrews is one of them—or had the privilege of sitting at his feet—men like A. O. Hume, Revd. Scott, Sir Syed Ahmed, Ranade, Telang, Malabari, Raghunath Rao and Bishan Narayan Dhar—had never any difficulty in declaring that, whatever the merits of individual comments based upon data supplied to him, he was the most tolerant religious reformer of the age and his love for his kind transcended the bounds of race, country, colour and even cultural unities. I must finish now. What I have written may sound presumptuous if solely regarded as the comments of a very small man upon the conduct of one justly regarded as the greatest man of the world. My only defence is that my reverence for you is equalled only by my love and devotion. Love and devotion have between themselves,

the miraculous power to raise the humble to the level of the mighty.

With love and reverence,

Yours affectionately,
RAMA DEVA

I have always said that my politics are subservient to my religion. I have found myself in them, as I could not live my religious life, i.e., a life of service, without being affected by them. I should discard them today if they hindered it. I cannot therefore subscribe to the doctrine that I may not, being a political leader, deal with matters religious. I have dealt with the Arya Samaj because I felt that it was losing its usefulness and its present activity was doing harm to the country itself. As a friend and a Hindu, I claimed to speak pointedly to those who derived their belief from a common source. Had I been dealing with the relative merits of religions, I should certainly have given my views on Islam too.

I confess that I have no first-hand knowledge of the Vedas. But I know enough to be able to judge for myself. Principal Ramdeva is wrong in thinking that I was prejudiced against Maharshi Dayanand's teachings. I do not know the exact terms of the tribute paid to the great reformer by the great men whom Principal Ramdeva mentions. I should have joined them in their tribute and still retained the opinion I hold. I do not love my wife the less because I know her limitations. My critics have made the mistake of thinking that, because I have criticized the founder, I have no affection or regard for him. Let me also assure Principal Ramdeva that I have read all the chapters of *Satyarth Prakash*. Will he forget that a man's moral teaching may be of a high order and yet his vision may be narrow? I know that many of my friends, who believe me to be a highly moral man and my moral teaching of a high order, consider that my outlook upon life is narrow and even fanatical. I do not take their criticism as an offence, though I consider myself to have a broad outlook upon life and also entitled to be classed among the most tolerant among mankind. I assure my Arya Samaj friends that I have only judged, if I have judged, as I should be judged by them. Let us therefore cry quits. Let them consider me to be the most intolerant and ignorant among their countrymen and leave me the liberty to retain the opinion I have expressed.

Young India, 19-6-1924

141. THE ACID TEST

I propose to move at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee the following four resolutions:

1. In view of the fact that the members of Congress organizations throughout the country have themselves hitherto neglected hand-spinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning-wheel and its product, hand-spun khaddar, have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of swaraj and although their acceptance has been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A.I.C.C. resolves that all the members of the various representative Congress organizations shall, except when disabled by sickness or prevented by continuous travelling, regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall send to the secretary of the All-India Khadi Board at least ten *tolas* each[1] of even and well-twisted yarn of a count not below ten,[2] so as to reach him not later than the 15th day of each month, the first consignment to reach the secretary[3] not later than the 15th day of August 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall[4] be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organizations.[5]

2. Inasmuch as complaints have been received that provincial secretaries and other members of Congress organizations do not carry out the instructions issued to them from time to time by officers duly authorized thereto, the A.I.C.C. hereby resolves that those in charge of matters referred to them failing to comply with the instructions of officers thereto appointed shall be deemed

[1] The resolution was moved by Gandhiji at the A.I.C.C. meeting, with certain verbal changes, on June 27. The words "ten *tolas* each" were replaced by "two thousand yards".

[2] The words "of a count not below ten" were omitted.

[3] The words "not later than the 15th day of each month, the first consignment to reach the secretary" were omitted.

[4] Here the words "unless unavoidably prevented" were added.

[5] Though this penalty clause was included in the resolution moved by Gandhiji, it was later rescinded by him in view of the Swarajist opposition; *vide* "Speech and Resolution on Penal Clause", 28-6-1924.

to have vacated their offices and the vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner, provided that the member thus vacating shall not be eligible for re-election till the next general election.[1]

3. In the opinion of the A.I.C.C., it is desirable that the Congress electors elect to various offices in the Congress organizations, only those who in their persons carry out to the full the Congress creed and the various non-co-operation resolutions of the Congress including the five boycotts, namely, of all mill-spun cloth, Government law-courts, schools, titles and legislative bodies; and the A.I.C.C. hereby resolves that the members who do not believe in and do not in their own persons carry out the said boycotts shall vacate their seats and that there should be fresh elections in respect of such seats; provided that, if the members vacating so choose, they may offer themselves for re-election.[2]

4. The A.I.C.C. regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family; and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the A.I.C.C. strongly condemns this and all such political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the Congress creed and its resolution of non-violent non-co-operation; and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards swaraj, and interfere with the preparations for civil disobedience which, in the opinion of the A.I.C.C., is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice, but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.[3]

At the present moment, I seem to be doing the very thing I claim to wish to avoid, viz., dividing the Congressmen and plunging the country into a controversy. I however assure the reader that it will not last long at least so far as I am concerned. Everyone will share my anxiety and eagerness to clear the air of uncertainty. Some discussion is inevitable if we are to know where we are. I am supposed to work wonders, lead the nation to its predestined goal. Fortunately for me, I entertain no such hallucinations. But I do claim to be a humble soldier. If the reader will not laugh at me, I do not mind telling him that I can become also an efficient general on usual terms. I must have soldiers who would obey and who have faith in themselves and in their

[1] This was later revised and moved by Gandhiji on June 29; *vide* "Resolutions at A.I.C.C. Meeting", 29-6-1924.

[2] This resolution was revised twice—first in the Working Committee and again before Gandhiji moved it at the A.I.C.C. meeting on June 29.

[3] This was moved and passed without any change; *vide* "Resolutions at A.I.C.C. Meeting", 29-6-1924.

general and who will willingly carry out instructions. My plan of action is always open and very definite. Certain well-defined conditions being fulfilled, it guarantees success. But what is a poor general to do when he finds soldiers who subscribe to his conditions and yet do not carry them out in their own persons and, maybe, do not even believe in them? The resolutions are designed to test the qualifications of the soldiers.

But let me put it another way. The soldiers are in the happy position of being electors of their own general. The would-be general must know the conditions of employment. I remain where I stood in 1920. Only my faith has increased with the years that have gone by. If such is also the case with my employers, I am theirs body and soul. I have no faith in any other plan. I am, therefore, not available on any other terms, not because I am unwilling, but because I am unfit. How would it do if, in answer to an advertisement for a red-haired young man of thirty-five measuring six feet six inches, a grey-haired, old, toothless man of fifty-five, broken down in health, offered his services?

All the four resolutions then constitute my application for employment as general and lay down my qualifications and limitations. Here there is no imposition of autocracy, no impossible demand. The members, if they are true to the country and themselves, will not spare me if they find me to be in the wrong. I hold no man to be indispensable for the welfare of the country. Every one of us is debtor to the land of our birth and therethrough to humanity. Every debtor must be dismissed the moment he has ceased to pay. No past services however brilliant should be counted in distributing present employments. The country's good may not be sacrificed to one man or one hundred men. Rather should he or they be sacrificed to the welfare of the country. I invite the members of the A.I.C.C. to approach their task with a determined purpose, without bias, without false emotion or sentiment. I adjure them not to take me on trust. Nothing need be right because I say so. They must decide for themselves. They must know their own minds and their capacity. They should know by this time that I am a difficult companion and a hard task-master. They will now find me harder than before.

I have seen the argument advanced that khadi cannot bring swaraj. This is an old argument. If India wants the fineries of Europe, whether made in the mills of Manchester or Bombay, she must cease to think of swaraj in the terms of the millions of her sons and daughters. If we believe in the message of the wheel, we must spin it ourselves and I promise that it will be an inspiring

occupation. If we want swaraj through non-violent means, and, therefore, through non-violent disobedience, we must produce a non-violent atmosphere. If, instead of haranguing crowds, we would give spinning demonstrations in their midst, we would have a peaceful atmosphere. If I could help it, I would gag every member of the Congress organizations except myself and, perhaps, Shaukat Ali, till swaraj is attained, and put him to the spinning-wheel or in charge of a spinning centre. If the silent wheel does not inspire faith and courage and hope, let the members say so boldly.

The second and the third resolutions are complementary of the first.

The fourth resolution tests our belief in the non-violent policy. I have read Deshbandhu Das's statement on the Gopinath Saha resolution. It does not affect what I said last week. So long as the Congress retains and believes in its present creed, there is no half-way house to the resolution drafted by me.

Young India, 19-6-1924

142. *WHAT MAY HINDUS DO?*

I have received many communications on the Hindu-Muslim statement, but there being nothing new or striking in them, I have not published them. But I gladly print Babu Bhagwandas's letter[1] and answer his questions.

Regarding the first two questions, the writer has answered them himself. In my opinion, they are only partly true. Though the majority of the Mussalmans of India and the Hindus belong to the same 'stock', the religious environment has made them different. I believe and I have noticed too that thought transforms man's features as well as character. The Sikhs are the most recent illustration of the fact. The Mussalman, being generally in a minority, has as a class developed into a bully. Moreover, being heir to fresh traditions, he exhibits the virility of a comparatively new system of life. Though, in my opinion, non-violence has a predominant place in the Koran, the thirteen hundred years of imperialistic expansion has made the Mussalmans fighters as a body. They are therefore aggressive. Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit. The Hindu has an ages-old civilization. He is essentially non-violent. His civilization has

[1] *Vide* Appendix III.

passed through the experiences that the two recent ones are still passing through. If Hinduism was ever imperialistic in the modern sense of the term, it has outlived its imperialism and has, either deliberately or as a matter of course, given it up. Predominance of the non-violent spirit has restricted the use of arms to a small minority which must always be subordinate to a civil power highly spiritual, learned and selfless. The Hindus as a body are, therefore, not equipped for fighting. But not having retained their spiritual training, they have forgotten the use of an effective substitute for arms and, not knowing their use nor having an aptitude for them, they have become docile to the point of timidity or cowardice. This vice is, therefore, a natural excrescence of gentleness. Holding this view, I do not think that the Hindu exclusiveness, bad as it undoubtedly is, has much to do with the Hindu timidity. Hence, also, my disbelief in *akhadas* as a means of self-defence. I prize them for physical culture but, for self-defence, I would restore the spiritual culture. The best and most lasting self-defence is self-purification. I refuse to be lifted off my feet because of the scares that haunt us today. If Hindus would but believe in themselves and work in accordance with their traditions, they will have no reason to fear bullying. The moment they recommence the real spiritual training the Mussalman will respond. He cannot help it. If I can get together a band of young Hindus with faith in themselves and, therefore, faith in the Mussalmans, the band will become a shield for the weaker ones. They (the young Hindus) will teach how to die without killing. I know no other way. When our ancestors saw affliction surrounding them, they went in for *tapasya*—purification. They realized the helplessness of the flesh and in their helplessness they prayed till they compelled the Maker to obey their call. 'Oh yes,' says my Hindu friend, 'but then God sent someone to wield arms.' I am not concerned with denying the truth of the retort. All I say to the friend is that as a Hindu he may not ignore the cause and secure the result. It will be time to fight when we have done enough *tapasya*. Are we purified enough, I ask? Have we even done willing penance for the sin of untouchability, let alone the personal purity of individuals? Are our religious preceptors all that they should be? We are beating the air whilst we simply concentrate our attention upon picking holes in the Mussalman conduct. As with the Englishmen, so with the Mussalman. If our professions are true, we should find it infinitely less difficult to conquer the Mussalman than the English. But Hindus whisper to me that they have hope of the

Englishman but none of the Mussalman. I say to them, 'If you have no hope of the Mussalman, your hope of the Englishman is foredoomed to failure.'

The other questions can be briefly answered. The *goondas* came on the scene because the leaders wanted them. The leaders distrusted one another. Distrust never comes from well-defined causes. A variety of causes, more felt than realized, breeds distrust. We have not yet visualized the fact that our interests are identical. Each party seems vaguely to believe that it can displace the other by some kind of manoeuvring. But I freely confess, as suggested by Babu Bhagwandas, that our not knowing the kind of swaraj we want has also a great deal to do with the distrust. I used not to think so, but he had almost converted me before I became Sir George Lloyd's guest at the Yeravda Central Prison. I am now a confirmed convert.

The 'points of contact' referred to by me is a phrase intended to cover all social, religious and political relations alike as between individuals and masses. Thus, for instance, instead of accentuating the differences in religion, I should set about discovering the good points common to both. I would bridge the social distance wherever I can do so consistently with my religious belief. I would go out of my way to seek common ground on the political field.

As for the referee, I have named Hakim Saheb's name undoubtedly for the universal respect that it carried with it. But I would not hesitate to put the pen even in the hands of a Mussalman who may be known for his prejudices and fanaticism. For, as a Hindu, I should know that I have nothing to lose even if the referee gave the Mussalmans a majority of seats in every province. There is no principle at stake in giving or having seats in elective bodies. Moreover, experience has taught me to know that undivided responsibility immediately puts a man on his mettle and his pride or godfearingness sobers him.

Lastly, no proclamation or any such thing will avail unless some of us begin to act up to the proclamation even though we may be the fewest possible.

Young India, 19-6-1924

143. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[*June 20, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Your hand should attain the perfection of print. You have not said anything about the copy-book. Ramdas and Ba returned from Surat yesterday. Pragji's case has been postponed. Stay on there without worrying and recover your health. Radha is pulling on as well as she might, Mani is progressing rapidly. There has been no rain yet, only some advance showers.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI &C.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 447. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

144. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Jyeshtha Krishna 5 [*June 21, 1924*][2]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter.

We should remain non-violent, unmindful of whether we succeed or fail in our undertaking. This is the only natural way of demonstrating the principle of non-violence. It would be more correct to say that the result of ahimsa is always good. Such being our firm faith, we are not concerned whether our efforts are crowned with success today or years later. Those who were forcibly converted to Islam two hundred years ago cannot be a source of strength to it in so far as the policy of compulsion was resorted to in converting them. Similarly, if anyone is converted to Hinduism through force or fraud, that would be sowing the seeds of its destruction. We are as a rule misled by immediate results. In the history of a great community, two hundred years are a mere nothing.

[1] The postmark bears this date.

[2] This letter was written to the addressee in reply to his of June 11, 1924. *Jyeshtha Krishna* 5 fell on June 21.

Making people give up their habits with the help of law does not by itself constitute brute force or violence — to stop the sale of liquor by law and thereby force the addicts to give up the habit of drinking is not violence. If it were suggested that those given to drinking should be whipped, that would certainly be brute force. Selling liquor is no duty of the State.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

As regards *Y.I.*, Swami Anand tells me that the bill has been sent to you.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6011. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

145. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

[*June 21, 1924*]

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

Thank you for your letter. You may let our friends use my letter to you. In this connection I do not want to lose touch with you. My sole reliance for the cleanness of their work is on you. What I am anxious about is that they should collect funds on the strength of their character. We may come in to supplement. Thank you for your concern about my health. I am giving me as much rest as possible under the circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, p. 298

146. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Jeth Vad 5 [*June 21, 1924*][1]

There should be no difficulty in your coming here at the time of the A.I.C.C. session, but you should give up the idea of attending the meetings. Maulana Mahomed Ali alone, I think, is issuing passes. The less of them are issued the better.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 71

[1] As in the printed source

147. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

June 21, 1924

DEAR BROTHER,

Please return this letter[1] after reading it. My conjecture has proved true.

Khuda Hafiz from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

ABBAS TYABJI
CAMP BAWDA

From a microfilm of the Gujarati original : S. N. 10468

148. MY NOTES

SPINNING-WHEEL MADNESS

An old man, who is a friend, noting the mistakes of young people, fell to examining himself. He writes:[2]

This friend has started spinning only recently. It is, therefore, not a small thing that he forgets the world while spinning. I am sure that when the yarn comes out uniformly, he will catch a glimpse of God in his heart and he will even see God dancing on the thread. Is there a single thing or place without Him? Though we can see, we are in fact blind and, therefore, do not see Him. When we come to associate with the spinning-wheel the sacred idea that it will end the sufferings of the country, will feed the hungry, will protect the honour of women, will end the indolence of the idle, will win swaraj for the Swarajist and help a person in his effort for self-control, then surely God will dance on the yarn and the writer of this letter will see Him as he plies the spinning-wheel. "As the faith, so the achievement."[3]

SPINNING-WHEEL IN SOMALILAND!

A Khoja merchant of Somaliland, Mr. Mahomed Hassam Chaman, informs us that there are many women in the country

[1] Not available

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that, while spinning, he forgot the world but could not think of God.

[3] Gujarati saying

who weave. So far they used to weave cloth from mill-yarn, but now even the spinning-wheel has come into use. No great effort has been made to spread its use, but some effort is being made now. The movement in India has had a good effect on the Arabs of Somaliland. Mr. Chaman feels that the spinning-wheel will be taken up fast in Somaliland. He further tells us that schools are run there almost free, so to say. The children receive only religious instruction to start with. Every child has to learn to recite passages from *Koran-e-sharif*. The school houses are put up with strips of bamboo and cost little. Every child takes to school daily a handful of *jowar*[1] and that is accepted as the teacher's salary! Finally, Mr. Chaman reports that though the population of Somaliland consists principally of Arabs, with a few Hindu merchants in their midst, the latter live happily there and the Arabs treat them as friends. Why should Hindus and Muslims quarrel in their own land?

Khadi Wear for Weddings

A correspondent from Wadhwan writes to say that three hundred families have, for some reason or other, broken away from the Jhalawad Visha Shrimali Sthanakvasi circle and have reduced customary expenses on several heads. Among other things, they have passed a resolution to the effect that at the time of wedding the bride should be dressed in khadi and wear bangles of sandalwood. If others also adopt such a rule, it will save people from many difficulties and go a long way to help the poor. The correspondent adds, however, that on other occasions these families use foreign cloth and that the practice is likely to continue. If this small group of three hundred families wants to, it can take the vow of using khadi on all occasions. The stock of khadi produced in Wadhwan itself is still lying unsold. That, despite all this khadi propaganda, only a little of it has been produced and that too has not been sold immediately suggests, not only that its use has not become universal yet, but that it has not even come to stay. How is it that the twenty-six lakhs of people of Kathiawar do not purchase annually even ten lakhs worth of khadi?

In a School

A lady teacher writes:[2]

[1] Coarse millet

[2] The letter is not translated here. She had written that she was sending to Gandhiji a handkerchief woven in her school out of yarn spun there from cotton grown in her father's field.

Here is a fine example of how much can be accomplished by the faith even of one sister. If only all daughters of cultivators' families asked for cotton from their parents' homes, got it carded, spun, woven and made into garments by the children! Every reader can work out for himself what gain this would mean.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 22-6-1924

149. THE "PURDAH" AND THE PLEDGE

I have not given this caption because these two words have anything in common. Writing about the Rajput Conference[1], I wish to write separately on these two topics only and have, therefore, put the words together here. A visitor at the Conference informs me that there was unbounded enthusiasm there. About fifteen thousand Rajputs must have gathered on the occasion. Even the number of women present exceeded anyone's expectations. There must have been a thousand of them. The number was indeed very large. But the curtains were so effectively disposed that a stranger could not know that somewhere in the Conference *pandal* there were women too present. Even the arrangements for carrying them from where they were lodged to the Conference site were so skilful that no one could judge that women were passing along.

The organizers of the Conference certainly deserve congratulations on making such perfect arrangements. But one can only express sorrow for the fact of curtains having been put up. The time, one may say, when curtains were necessary is past. There seem to have been no curtains during Rama's rule. It is of course true that we still do not have *Ramarajya*[2], but, if we so desire, we may act right from now as if we had it. We have yet to show that, even in the absence of curtains, we can conduct ourselves with decorum. None can say that the communities which do not observe *purdah* show any the less decorum. When women were regarded as chattels and were often kidnapped, the *purdah* might well have been necessary. If men were kidnapped, they too might have to remain under *purdah*. In places where a man, when seen, is made to do forced labour, the men observe purdah even today, that is, they hide themselves. The *purdah*, however, is not the means of

[1] The Kathiawar Rajput Conference

[2] Rule of Rama, traditionally regarded as the ideal social and political order

saving women from men's evil eye; the only means is men's own purity of character.

A woman can take a big hand in teaching men such purity. But how can a woman who remains in *purdah*, suppressed, teach a man purity? If she is taught to live in fear of men right from the beginning, how can she reform them? Moreover, the very fact of keeping a woman behind *purdah* has the effect of creating moral weakness in her. I believe that *purdah* helps not the maintenance but the destruction of morality. What is necessary for promoting it is education in morality, a moral environment and moral conduct among the elders. I do not write at this length about *purdah* with a view to finding fault with the Conference. It would have been difficult to abolish *purdah* right at the start. But a few Rajputs must start working for the future.

Now about the pledge. I hear that a good many people took it. I also hear that it was taken with deliberation. The procedure adopted for the taking of the pledge was also good. Let us hope, therefore, that the pledge will be kept scrupulously. It has been my experience, however, that a good many pledges taken in big gatherings are not acted upon. This, of course, does not mean that we should not take pledges. It is certainly my opinion, confirmed by experience, that one never progresses without taking pledges. A pledge means a resolution to be kept up unto death. No task can ever be accomplished without such resolutions. "According to my capacity" is of no help at all. A pledge confers on man inexhaustible strength. A person who would do a thing only to the best of his capacity is sure to weaken some time or other. He will have, then, no support. A pledge, however, will save him in such a contingency. He had taken the pledge with God as witness. When he loses his own strength, the Helper of the helpless will be there by his side.

Unfortunately, we put little value on pledges. As people do not think much before taking one, they are unable to keep it. Having got into the habit of not keeping pledges, they have almost come to believe that it is not necessary to keep them. We should all wish that the Rajput brothers and sisters who have taken the pledge will keep it.

The simplicity of the Conference was worthy of emulation by the Congress. There was nothing more than chapatis and dal by way of meals for this huge concourse. Nothing else is possible in a big gathering and nothing else would be appropriate either. The Sikh brethren, too, observe like simplicity in their gatherings. The members of the Congress should learn the lesson of simplicity.

It saves expense, time and labour and, in addition, makes the body strong and preserves health.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-6-1924

150. TO THOSE WHO GET THEIR CLOTH WOVEN

We often hear the complaint that those who spin have no facilities for getting the yarn woven. The Vijapur (*via* Kalol)[1] office, which is run by Mrs. Gangabehn Majumdar, undertakes weaving of khadi at the following rates:

Breadth in inches	Length	Yarn thick	Yarn fine	Specific patterns
		Rate in rupees		
24	Per 15-yd. length	2-4 as.	2-8 as.	2-12 as.
28	,, ,, ,,	2-12 as.	3-00	3-8 as.
42	Per 8-yd. length	2-12 as.	3-00	
48	,, ,, ,,	3-00	3-4 as.	

The yarn to be woven should be sent to the above address. Anyone who wants further details may also write to them. The same production centre has started a store called Shri Shuddha Khadi Bhandar on Richey Road (Chudgar Pole, Ahmedabad). At this store, one can get even slivers at Re. 1 a seer.

Anyone wishing to get yarn woven should remember that he may even be disappointed if he sends any sort or any quantity of yarn there. Yarn enough to make one *tani*[2] at least should be sent. Moreover, if the yarn is not good and well-twisted, the cloth woven will be poor. It is certainly a help that one can go and buy slivers, but it is very necessary that each one should card his own cotton. The process is very easy and, for anyone who spins only a little every day, carding the required cotton is but child's play. The cotton carded in half an hour would certainly take not less than four hours to spin into good yarn.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-6-1924

[1] In North Gujarat

[2] Same as *tano*, which represents a length of 20 yards. A whole piece of cloth generally has this length.

151. PROFITS IN WEAVING

I have received several replies in response to my request that people should write to me about the profits actually made in weaving. I present this time some of them which are worthy of note. Bhavsar Chandulal Chhaganlal from Cambay writes:[1]

It is to be regretted that Shri Chandulal uses foreign yarn as warp and woof. We hope that, even if it means working hard, he will start using hand-spun yarn. From the account given by him, one can see that, if hand-spun yarn is available and khadi produced sells regularly, a weaver family will certainly earn enough. Weavers and others should take a lesson from the fact that Shri Chandulal and other members of the Bhavsar community in Cambay use only khadi. Even those who have to deal in foreign cloth can certainly use khadi themselves.

Upadhyay Vijeshanker Kashiram reports his experience as follows:[2]

This relates to the exclusive use of hand-spun yarn and is from a man who has just learnt weaving. It should, therefore, be regarded as more useful to us. It is clear that, if the hand-spun yarn is uniform and well-twisted and, if the weaver has more experience, his earnings will be higher.

Shri Jivanlal Champaneria sends us the third report, which is as follows:[3]

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that, having lost his job for taking part in the Non-co-operation movement, he learned in a few months his family craft of weaving and was then able to earn Rs. 50 every month.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had reported that, if a man worked for 10 to 12 hours a day, he could turn out 6 to 7 yards of khadi from hand-spun yarn. Besides attending to other processes, a weaver could turn out 16 yards in four days, his monthly income working out at Rs. 15. That was better than Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 which a village teacher or a clerk earned.

[3] The letter is not translated here. Saying that he could not understand how Gandhiji had calculated that a weaver could earn on an average Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a day, the correspondent had reported that, among the members of the *Bhavsar* community in Borsad, the daily earnings of the husband, the wife and a boy or girl amounted to no more than Rs. 1.37. He had also complained that, owing to the necessity for the whole family to work for their livelihood, they knew little of India's immemorial civilization, the women did not understand the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene and, as a consequence, their lives were dull and drab and lacked culture.

I had stated that the earnings, not of one weaver as reported by Shri Jivanlal, but of a weaver-family amounted to Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a day.

From the three examples cited above, we see that the weavers' product reaches the consumer not directly, but through the dealer. Normally, it should of course be so. It is clear that, if the weaver functions as a dealer as well and has control over the quality of spinning, his earnings will be higher. If yarn of the quality spun in Andhra can be produced everywhere, saleable saris can be manufactured out of it and one will certainly earn a higher profit on them.

The complaint that the average weaver gets no time at all for his moral progress is quite justified. It is part of the excessive rigidity of the caste system that its artisan families following their profession for generations remain without literary and moral education. The educated, these days, seem to form a separate class, as it were; they have paid no attention at all to the rest, that is, the artisans, farmers and others. We, the educated people, have got on the backs of the artisans and other classes of people. Personally, I am convinced that if the educated class gets off the back of the uneducated classes, the latter will have few problems. This is the main idea behind our present activity. Many among the educated have come to understand the value of physical labour, and also to see the sin in riding on the back of the uneducated. Meanwhile, sensible weavers can save some time by being more regular in work and by better organizing their industry. As the khadi movement progresses, weaving and other related work will come to be better organized and will be placed on a sound basis.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-6-1924

152. THREE QUESTIONS

(1) Does not spinning and weaving make a man a Sudra?

(2) Is it not contrary to principles of economics that even one who can earn much more through his brains should make a living by spinning and weaving?

(3) Does not spinning and weaving by all destroy the principle of division of labour?

In my view a Sudra is one who earns his living by doing service or wage labour for others. Thus considered all who do service are Sudras. How can one who pursues an independent occupation be treated as a Sudra? I do not see this does any harm to *varnashrama*.

Now the second question. My conviction tells me that God gave us the intellect for knowing ourselves. A living should be got out of agriculture, etc. The chief cause of all the wickedness that there is in the world is the misuse of the intellect. It is through the misuse of the intellect that there is so much inequality in the world. Tens of millions go about begging while a hundred or two become millionaires. The true economics is that by which every man and woman gets a living by physical labour.

Now as to the third question. There is no harm done to the principle of division of labour. For the masons, the goldsmiths, etc., are not being asked to take to spinning. Yes, those who do service, or practise law, or have no occupation at all are advised to earn their livelihood by spinning and weaving. Spinning, at the present time and in this field, I consider a *yajna*. Spinning is a necessary *yajna* for all—young and old, men and women, rich and poor. Honest men have to go hungry. They should feed themselves through spinning. But the others should, for their sake, pray to God and spin.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 22-6-1924

153. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Jeth Vad 6 [*June 22, 1924*][1]

PU. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. I am glad to know that you will be able to come within a month.[2] When we are unhappy, it is certainly better to find fault with ourselves rather than with others.

You cannot abandon your daughter-in-law. If you persuade your son and with his consent stay away for a fairly long period, she will, I believe, come round. If, however, such separation even for a short period is not possible, you must consider the unhappiness as inevitable and suffer it. There is nothing unusual if a mother lives away from her eldest son. Your son is obedient; you will therefore have no difficulty even in separation. If he provides you with the necessary money, his wife need not know it or have anything to lay against it. If this is done with perfect sweetness, reconciliation is bound to take place in the end. This is what is called domestic non-co-operation. The non-co-operation which aims at ultimate co-operation is moral.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6012. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

154. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Jeth Vad 7 [*June 23, 1924*][3]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got your letter written in a beautiful hand. Now I believe you can be given five marks [out of ten]. I shall send you a copy-book.

If there are many reforms that have to be brought about, we should find out the principal ones and concentrate on them. The others will follow automatically.

[1] & [2] The addressee went to the Ashram in 1924 with her daughter's two children. In that year *Jeth Vad* 6 fell on June 22.

[3] Gandhiji's letters to the addressee dated June 13, 16 and 20, 1924, suggest that this letter too was written in the same year. In 1924 *Jeth Vad* 7 fell on June 23.

You are definitely debarred from cherishing mental worries. The mind itself is our enemy as well as our friend. It is our duty to keep it under control. No medicine from a doctor is required for this. Please let me share your mental worries without any reservation. You caught my eye the very day we first met. I have looked upon you as a well-behaved daughter ever since. I know that I have not been able to share your grief to the extent I would have wished to, for I could not give you sufficient time. This only shows my inadequacy. Do shake off mental worry. This is the true and perhaps the only reform worth the name.

I shall give your letter to Ramdas. I shall not stop him if he wishes to go.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I do not remember to have written *Jeth Vad* o. If, however, it was written, it was done quite inadvertently.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 547. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

155. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA[1]

[AHMEDABAD,
June 24, 1924]

Asked whether from all he had seen he was still certain that he would be able to avoid a fratricidal war, Mr. Gandhi replied:

Certainly. There seems nothing to make me despair of being able to avoid internal dissensions. Opinions may differ as to the interpretation of the phrase, but I have very little doubt that there would be no unseemly dissensions. I regard members of the All-India Congress Committee, whether Swarajists or No-changers, to be patriotic enough to consider the welfare of the country in preference to every other question. It is perfectly true that the Swarajists feel keenly about their own position as I do about mine. But I give them the same credit for love of country as I claim for myself. That being so, there is not the slightest reason why it should be impossible to come to an understanding whereby both can work along their own lines.

To the next question, if he did not think that the spinning-wheel was too tame for young workers, Mr. Gandhi said:

[1] Gandhiji was interviewed in the afternoon at the Sabarmati Ashram by a special representative of the Associated Press of India.

It appears to be too tame only to those who have not worked at it and who have been too lazy to think out its economy and unifying value. Those who are nurtured on theories of political economy deduced by Western writers from Western conditions have taken no note of the special conditions of India. It presents a problem all its own, as I have repeatedly said. Whatever judgment may be pronounced upon many things I have advocated, history will pronounce only one judgment on the spinning-wheel, namely, that it was the only thing that could put India on her feet. I know that the difficulties are enormous, but they are not insurmountable and certainly not nearly as great as the difficulty of reaching the top of Mount Everest; and when a few brave Englishmen have succeeded in the enterprise, I must leave to the experts to say what the gain will be to the world. But it requires no expert to say what the success of the spinning-wheel must mean. I am convinced that, as soon as the Congress workers realize for themselves the possibilities of this simple invention, in an incredibly short space of time the charkha will occupy a place in the Indian home next only to the simple village stove.

The Hindu, 25-6-1924

156. OPEN LETTER TO A.I.C.C. MEMBERS

[Before *June 26, 1924*]

DEAR FRIENDS,

We rightly regard the Congress to be the most representative of the nation whether for better or for worse. In my opinion, the Congress has an almost perfect constitution designed to represent the nation to the fullest possible extent. But being ourselves imperfect, we have worked it very indifferently. Our voters' roll has been reduced practically to nil in many parts of India. But, in spite of it all, an organization that has persisted for forty years and weathered many a storm must remain the most powerful in the land. We regard ourselves as its chosen representatives.

The Congress took a resolution in 1920 that was designed to attain swaraj in one year.[1] At the end of that year we were within an ace of getting it. But because we failed to get it then, we may not now regard it as indefinitely postponed. On the contrary, we must retain the same attitude of hopefulness as before.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIX, Appendix I.

Above all, we must be determined to get swaraj soon, sooner than the chilly atmosphere around us will warrant.

It is in that spirit that I have framed the resolutions for submission to you. They have been before the country now for a week. I have read some of the criticism directed against them. I believe I am open to conviction. But the criticism has not altered it. I have no axes to grind, or the only axe I have to grind is that which will enable us to strike at the root of every impediment in our way.

I believe in khaddar, I believe in the spinning-wheel. It has two aspects—terrible and benign.

In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, viz., that of foreign cloth. It alone can kill the demoralizing British self-interest. Then and then only, when that interest is killed, shall we be in a position to talk to British statesmen on equal terms. Today they are, as we would be in their place, blinded by self-interest.

In its benign aspect, it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions. It is life-giving. I would not, therefore, hesitate to turn the Congress into an exclusively khaddar-producing and khaddar-propaganda organization till the attainment of swaraj, just as I would not hesitate, if I believed in the use of arms and giving violent battle to England, to make the Congress an organization exclusively devoted to training the nation in the use of arms. To be truly national the Congress must devote itself exclusively to that which will bring the nation most quickly within reach of swaraj.

Because I believe in the potency of khaddar to give swaraj, I have given it the foremost place in our programme. You will not hesitate summarily to reject it, if you do not share my belief. But if you believe in khaddar, you will regard the requirements I have submitted as a mild minimum. I assure you, if I was not afraid of putting an undue strain on you, I would not have hesitated to implore you to give four hours per day to spinning instead of a paltry half hour.

In this connection, let me confess my distrust of Swarajists. I understand that the khaddar among them is on the wane more than among the others. It distressed me to find that several Swarajists had said final good-bye to khaddar and that the material of which their dress was made was foreign. A few have threatened that, if I persecute them in the manner I am doing, they

would give up khaddar and the charkha altogether. I am told that many No-changers are not much better. Khaddar with them still remains a ceremonial dress, but for household wear they do not hesitate to wear *videshi*[1] or mill-cloth. The wearing of khaddar to patronize me is worse than useless and the wearing of it on ceremonial occasions only is hypocritical. Do you not agree with me that both patronage and hypocrisy should be banished from our midst? If you believe in the potency of khaddar, you will take it up, not because I advocate it, but because it has become part of your life. I note that a certain fashion of dress has been prescribed for the Viceregal social function. Prohibition of khaddar is but a short step from the last. Yet another stage, and there will be prohibition in the Assembly and Councils.

Another vexed question is about the practising lawyers. It is clear to me that, if we cannot run the Congress without them, we must make the frank confession and remove the boycott. I am free to confess that removal of that boycott is a natural corollary to that of the Councils. If entry into the legislative bodies can give, as they do, some relief, so does practice in the law-courts. We are all aware of the signal services that the late Manomohan Ghosh rendered to the poor by the voluntary assistance rendered by him to them. The Government institutions could not have existed if they had nothing attractive about them. Only, this is no new discovery. Ours is a struggle consisting of self-sacrifice pure and simple. We sacrificed the doubtful, temporary and partial good done by these institutions for the lasting good of the whole country. Moreover, if there is such a thing as honour among us, does it not behove us to retain the boycott apart from any other reason, for the sake of those lawyers who have been disbarred in Tamilnad, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, and elsewhere? We shall be building traditions of honour only if we cherish it even for the least among us. Let the practising lawyers beware. No family considerations can be allowed to override those of honour. Don't make the mistake of supposing that we can gain swaraj within a short time, even though we may be dead to all sense of honour. Unless the Congress can at the present moment produce proud, defiant, self-respecting, sensitive, selfless and self-sacrificing patriots who would count no cost too great, there is, for this poor country of ours, for a long time to come, no swaraj in which the poorest can participate. You and I may get a larger share in the spoils of exploitation, but I am sure you will refuse to call that swaraj.

[1] Foreign

Need I say anything about the schools? If we cannot resist the temptation of sending our children to the Government schools, really, I cannot understand the opposition to the *system*. If the Government schools and law-courts and legislatures are good enough to attract us, our opposition is clearly to the *personnel* and not to the *system*. Non-co-operation was conceived for a much nobler purpose. If the wish is merely that *we* rather than *Englishmen* man the system, I grant that the boycotts are not only useless but harmful. The logical outcome of the Government policy is to Europeanize India and, immediately we have become Europeanized, our English masters will gladly hand over the reins of Government to us. We would be welcomed as their willing agents. I can have no interest in that deadly process save to put the whole of my humble weight against it. My swaraj is to keep intact the genius of our civilization. I want to write many new things, but they must be all written on the Indian slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.

Viewed in the light I have put before you, the five boycotts are vital for the Congress. They are vital for swaraj for the masses.

Such a big question cannot be decided merely by a show of hands, it cannot be decided even by argument. It must be decided by each one of us by ringing for the still small voice within. Each one of us must retire to his closet and ask God to give a definite guidance.

This battle for freedom is no play for you and me. It is the most serious thing in our lives. If, therefore, the programme sketched by me does not commend itself to you, you must summarily reject it, cost what it may.

Your fellow-worker
in the service
of the Motherland,
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 26-6-1924

157. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES – IX*

Some Convict-warders

I have already dealt with the system of appointing convicts as officers or warders. I hold the system to be thoroughly bad and demoralizing. The prison officials know it. They say it is due to economy. They think that the jails cannot be efficiently administered with the present paid staff without supplementing it with convict-officers. There is no doubt that, unless the reform suggested by me in the last chapter is inaugurated, it is not possible to do away with the system of entrusting convicts with responsible duties without a very large increase in the prison expenditure.

However, it is not my purpose in this chapter to deal any further with prison reform. I simply wish to relate my happy experiences of the convict officers who were appointed to watch over and look after us.

When Mr. Banker and I were transferred to the Yeravda Central Prison, there was one warder and one *bardasi*. The latter is what the name implies, a mere servant. The convict warder whose acquaintance we first made was a Hindu from the Punjab side. His name was Harkaran. He was convicted of murder. The murder according to him was not premeditated but due to a fit of anger. By occupation he was a petty merchant. His sentence was fourteen years, of which he had almost served nine years. He was fairly old. The prison life had told on him. He was always brooding and most anxious to be discharged. He was therefore morose and peevish. He was conscious of his high dignity. He was patronizing to those who obeyed and served him. He bullied those who crossed his path. To look at him, no one would think he could be guilty of murder. He could read Urdu fluently. He was religiously minded and was fond of reading *bhajans* in Urdu. The Yeravda library has a few books for prisoners in several Indian languages, e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Canarese, Tamil. Harkaran was not above keeping and hiding trifles in defiance of jail regulations. He was in the majority. It would be regarded snobbish and foolish not to steal trifles. A prisoner who did not follow this unwritten law would have a bad time of it from his fellows. Ostracism would be the least punishment. If the whole of the jail yard were to be dug up twelve inches deep, it would yield up many a secret in the shape of spoons, knives,

pots, cigarettes, soap and such like. Harkaran, being one of the oldest inmates of Yeravda, was a sort of purveyor-general to the prisoners. If a prisoner wanted anything, Harkaran was the supplier. I wanted a knife for cutting my bread and lemons. Harkaran could procure it if I would have it through him. If I wanted to go through the elaborate process of asking the superintendent, that was my business. I must be prepared for a snubbing. When we became friends, he related all his wonderful exploits; how he dodged officials, how he procured for himself and others dainties, what skilful tricks were employed by prisoners to obtain what they wanted and how it was almost impossible (in his opinion) not to resort to these tricks, was described in minute detail and with much gusto. He was horrified to discover that I was neither interested in the exploits nor was I minded to join the trade. He endeavoured subsequently somewhat to repair the indiscretion he had let himself into, and to assure me that he had seen my point and that he would thenceforth refrain from the irregularities. But I have a suspicion that the repentance was put on. The reader, however, must not run away with the idea that the jail officials do not know these irregularities. They are all an open secret. They not only know them, but often sympathize with the prisoners who do these tricks to make themselves happy and comfortable. They (the officials) believe in the doctrine of 'live and let live'. A prisoner, who behaves correctly in the presence of his superiors, obeys their orders, does not quarrel with his fellows and does not inconvenience officials, is practically free to break any regulation for the sake of procuring greater comfort.

Well, the first acquaintance with Harkaran was not particularly happy. He knew that we were 'important' prisoners. But so was he in a way. After all, he was an officer with a long and honourable record of service behind him. He was no respecter of persons. Mr. Banker was torn away from me the very next morning. Harkaran allowed the full force of his authority to descend upon me. I was not to do this or that. I was not to cross the white line referred to in my letter to Hakimji. But I had not the faintest idea of retaliating or resenting what he said or did. I was too engrossed in my own work and studies even to think of Harkaran's simple and childish instructions. It gave me momentary amusement. Harkaran discovered his error. When he saw that I did not resent his officiousness, nor did I pay any attention to it, he felt nonplussed. He was unprepared for such an emergency. He therefore took the only course that was left open to him and that was to recognize my dissimilarity and respond to me when I refused to

respond to him. My non-violent non-co-operation led to his co-operation. All non-violent non-co-operation, whether among individuals or societies, or whether between governments and the governed, must lead ultimately to hearty co-operation. Anyway Harkaran and I bcame perfect friends. When Mr. Banker was returned to me, he put the finishing touch. One of his many businesses in the jail was to boom me for all I was worth. He thought that Harkaran and others had not sufficiently realized my greatness. In two or three days time I found myself elevated to the position of a baby in woollens. I was too great to be allowed to sweep my own cell or to put out my own blankets for drying. Harkaran was all attention before, but now he became embarrassingly attentive. I could not do anything myself, not even wash a handkerchief. If Harkaran heard me washing it, he would enter the open bath-room and tear the kerchief away from me. Whether it was that the authorities suspected that Harkaran was doing anything unlawful for us or whether it was a mere accident, Harkaran was, to our sorrow, taken away from us. He felt the separation more perhaps than we did. He had a royal time with us. He had plenty of eatables and that openly from our rations, supplemented as they were with fruit that friends sent from outside. And as our fame was 'noised abroad', Harkaran's association with us had given him an added status with the other prisoners.

When I was given the permission to sleep on the cell verandah, the authorities thought that it was too risky to leave me with one warder only. Probably, the regulations required that a prisoner whose cell was kept open should have two warders to watch over him. It might even be that the addition was made for my protection. Whatever the cause, another warder was posted for night duty. His name was Shabaskhan. I never inquired about the cause, but I thought that a Mohammedan was chosen to balance the Hindu Harkaran. Shabaskhan was a powerful Baloochi. He was Harkaran's contemporary. Both knew each other well. Shabaskhan too was convicted of murder. It resulted from an affray in the clan to which he belonged. Shabaskhan was as broad as he was tall. His build always reminded me of Shaukat Ali. Shabaskhan put me at ease the very first day. He said, 'I am not going to watch you at all. Treat me as your friend and do exactly as you like. You will never find me interfering with you. If you want anything done, I shall be only too happy if I can do it for you.' Shabaskhan was as good as his word. He was always polite. He often tempted me with prison delicacies and always felt genuinely sorry that I would not partake of them. 'You know,' he would

say, 'if we do not help ourselves to these few things, life would be intolerable, eating the same things day in and day out. With your people, it is different. You come for religion. That fact sustains you, whereas we know that we have committed crimes. We would like to get away as soon as ever we can.' Shabaskhan was the jailor's favourite. Growing enthusiastic over him, he once said, 'Look at him. I consider him to be a perfect gentleman. In a fit of temper he has committed murder for which he truly repents. I assure you there are not many men outside who are better than Shabaskhan. It is a mistake to suppose that all prisoners are criminals. Shabaskhan I have found to be most trustworthy and courteous. If I had the power, I would discharge him today.' The jailor was not wrong. Shabaskhan was a good man, and he was by no means the only good prisoner in that jail. Let me note in passing that it was not the jail that had made him good. He was good outside.

It is customary in the jails never to keep a convict officer on the same duty for any length of time. Transfers constantly take place. It is a necessary precaution. Prisoners cannot be allowed, under the existing system, to develop intimate relations. We had, therefore, a most varied experience of convict officers. After about two months, Shabaskhan was replaced by Adan. But I must introduce this warder to the reader in the next chapter.

Young India, 26-6-1924

158. 'ET TU BRUTE!'

An esteemed friend says:

> If we do not take effective measures in time, the United Provinces may experience tomorrow what the Punjab is experiencing today. Hindu-Muslim tension in Oudh is growing. To give you an idea, I give below some facts about Barabanki. Serious allegations are made against the Municipal Board of that city which, now that all its Muslim members who were and are still staunch non-co-operators have resigned, consists of Hindu gentlemen only. I had no time to make any detailed enquiry with regard to these allegations, but one fact is pretty well established and is creating bitterness in the minds of Mussalmans. These Hindu gentlemen have passed a law that all applications to the Board be written in Hindi script. Applications in any other script will not be accepted.

I was painfully surprised to receive the above news. For, Barabanki, if I remember rightly, used to be Maulana Shaukat Ali's pride. He

used to speak in glowing terms of both the Hindus and the Muslims of Barabanki. I still hope that my informant is incorrectly informed. I cannot credit the Hindu councillors with having taken any such thoughtless step as is attributed to them. They will ill-serve the cause of Hindi script by compelling Mussalmans to adopt it. It should be optional throughout India, wherever Hindustani is the provincial language, for people to write petitions either in Devnagari or Urdu script. Which script will be ultimately accepted depends largely upon the intrinsic merits of the two scripts.

It is also difficult to understand why the Mussalman councillors have resigned. I hope someone in Barabanki will give full facts.

Young India, 26-6-1924

159. *THE AKALI STRUGGLE*

The public were hoping that the negotiations going on between the Akali leaders and the Punjab Government would bear fruit and that the Gurdwara question would be satisfactorily settled and the sufferings of the Akalis would end. But if the S.G.P.C.[1] is to be relied upon, the Government had willed otherwise. The Akali leaders, it is stated, were all that could be wished, but the Government would not even promise to release those prisoners who are now undergoing imprisonment, not for violence actually committed or contemplated, but practically for having taken part in the Gurdwara agitation.

The Akali struggle will, therefore, in all probability be prosecuted with greater vigour. The Government will also probably adopt more repressive measures. Fortunately, we have now become inured to repression. It has ceased to terrify us. The Akalis have shown the stuff of which they are made.

Let us see what they have already suffered for what to them is a deeply religious question. I will say nothing of the Nankana tragedy[2], the Keys affair[3], the Guru-ka-Bagh brutality or the Jaito firing[4]. I will not also say anything about S.G.P.C. being declared an unlawful association. The Congress has regarded it as a challenge to all public bodies that may be against the Government. Since the Jaito firing the Akalis, recognizing that their passive resistance to arrest was capable of being misunderstood

[1] Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, pp. 399-402.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXII, pp. 170-1.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 210.

for violence, have been regularly sending to Jaito Shahidi Jathas of 500 men generally every fortnight for quiet and submissive arrest. These allow themselves to be arrested without any opposition whatsoever. They, on their arrest, are sent by special train to what is said to be a jungle and there detained without any trial, without any charge. Dry rations are provided which they have to cook for themselves. The jungle which is supposed to be malarial and overgrown with grass passes muster for a prison. I understand that a few have died of fevers due to exposure and malarial climate. Over 3,000 prisoners are suffering in this fashion. Besides the Shahidi Jathas, smaller ones of 25 each have been crossing over to Jaito daily for the past nine months. They are taken to a station called Bawal and left there to shift for themselves. These Akalis often undergo severe hardships before reaching their destination. And so the awful routine goes on with clock-work regularity without apparently producing any impression on the authorities.

Why do these Jathas suffer thus? Simply for the sake of performing the *Akhand Path* ceremony which was rudely interrupted by the Nabha authorities and whose performance is even now being prevented. The Akalis have repeatedly stated that, whilst they claim the right to demand and secure for the Maharaja of Nabha an impartial and open inquiry, they do not want to use *Akhand Path* as a cloak to carry on any agitation in his favour. Why the *Akhand Path* is prevented no one can tell except that it is sought to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis which has organized and is carrying on the reform movement.

The demands of the Akalis seem to be absolutely simple. So far as I am aware, they are:

1. Possession of historical Gurdwaras by a central body elected by the Sikhs.
2. Right of every Sikh to possess a *kirpan* of any size.
3. Right of performing the *Akhand Path* in Jaito.

On the face of it, every one of these demands is unexceptionable and should be recognized for the asking. No community has shown so much bravery, sacrifice and skill in the prosecution of its object as the Akalis. No community has maintained the passive spirit so admirably as they. Any other government but the Indian would long ago have recognized the demands and the sacrifice of the Akalis and turned them from opponents into its voluntary supporters. But the Indian Government would not evoke the spirit of universal opposition which it has if it had cared for and respected public opinion.

The duty of the Hindu, Mussalman, and other sister communities is clear. They must help the reformers with their moral support and let the Government know unequivocally that, in the matters above named, the Akalis have the moral support of the whole of India. I know that the distrust that pervades the Indian atmosphere has not left the Akalis free from the contagion. The Hindus, and possibly the Mussalmans, distrust their intentions. They regard their activity with suspicion. Ulterior motives and ambition for the establishment of Sikh Raj are imputed to them. The Akalis have disclaimed any such intention. As a matter of fact, no disclaimer is necessary, and none can prevent such an attempt being made in the future. A solemn declaration made by all the Sikhs can easily be thrown on the scrap-heap if ever their successors entertain any such unworthy ambition. The safety lies only in the determination of us all to work for the freedom of all. From a practical standpoint too, moral support of the reform movement, it is clear, reduces the chances of unworthy ambition being harboured in the Sikh breast. As a matter of fact, any such mutual suspicion necessarily hinders the swaraj movement for it prevents hearty co-operation between the communities and thus consolidates the forces of exploitation of this fair land and perhaps even makes possible an ambition which is at present clearly impossible. We must therefore judge each communal movement on its merits and give it ungrudging support, when it is in itself sound, and the means employed for its conduct are honourable, open and peaceful.

Young India, 26-6-1924

160. NOTES

JA-MEN *v.* AMEN

A friend writes:

> I thank you for having given a clear-cut programme for the future. I know it is the old programme you reaffirm. But it seems new and startling, because we have erred from the right path. In Danish we have a saying *Ja-men* which means 'yes—but'—as against *Amen* which means simply 'yes'. Most of us seem to believe in *Ja-men*. 'Yes, we promised to boycott Government institutions and not serve our oppressors; but how can we do without them?' we seem to say. These 'buts' are an invention of the devil.

Unfortunately, the last-named gentleman is always with us. He panders to our weaknesses, works upon us through them and

charms us into his delusive snares. National workers will have to get out of his clutches and burn all the 'buts'. They may say 'yes' to the boycotts if they mean 'yes' without any reservation. Even if, believing in the boycotts, they cannot say 'yes' through their weakness, they should make the confession openly. It would do them and the country a world of good.

Dr. Mahmud and Forcible Conversions

Numerous letters, some angry and some even abusive, have been received by me regarding my reference to forcible conversions in the statement on Hindu-Muslim tension. One of them was a dispassionate and reasoned letter from Mr. Madhavan Nair protesting against the statement attributed by me to Dr. Mahmud. I forwarded the letter to Dr. Mahmud for reply so that I could give the reader his version. But before my letter could reach Dr. Mahmud, he had already posted one to me on the very thing, he having received many protests himself. I now give from Dr. Mahmud's letter, which is in Urdu, a translation of the relevant part as follows:

> Quite a number of Hindu friends have written to me letters accusing me of having given you inaccurate information with regard to the affairs in Malabar. Some of them have even treated me with round, mouth-filling abuse. I feel that their resentment is just. There seems to have been some misunderstanding. What I said was that no instances of conversion by circumcision could be found. Only one such case had been reported, the one which Mr. Andrews had witnessed, and even that could not be properly investigated into. As for instances of conversion by being made to wear fez cap, or shirt in case of women, or by clipping off the *choti*, they could be cited in any number. I had mentioned this point in my statement to Shwaib also. Please do publish the necessary correction in *Young India* or it might give rise to a fresh controversy in the Press.

I see that I have done an injustice to Dr. Mahmud. I was thinking of forcible conversions only by circumcision. It was that which had most shocked the Hindu sentiment. Anyway, it was that which had affected me more than anything else.

The following is the statement referred to by Dr. Mahmud:

> Forced conversion.
>
> (a) By circumcision. No eye-witness. No direct evidence available. No case pointed out. Reliable persons amongst Hindus allege that three or four cases occurred. The only direct evidence of a case of this nature is that Mr. Andrews is reported to have seen one person who was circumcised. Have not got it confirmed.

(b) Repetition of *kalma*. (1) Forced; (2) Through fear without actual use of force.

(c) Cutting of *choti*

(d) Making Hindus (men) wear caps.

(e) Making Hindu women wear bodices or blouses.

The total number of conversions under (b) to (e) are estimated between 1,800 to 2,000 (Hindu version). Muslims put it at a few hundred.

I had thought that my statement was clear. Though I had not mentioned Mr. Andrews' name, it was common knowledge that he had referred to a case of forcible circumcision which had come under his own personal observation. Bearing that in mind, there could be no mistaking my meaning. But I now see that I compromised Dr. Mahmud by exposing him to the charge of partiality by an apparent understatement of forcible conversions. I am sorry for the unintended inaccuracy. In times of high tension, one cannot be too careful or too accurate. In trying to be fair to Dr. Mahmud, I have succeeded in being unfair to him. I assure the reader that in every case I have kept closest to facts and shorn them of all colouring. The papers in my possession make out a much more terrible case against all parties. But I have in each case toned down the charges and, where I had no opinion of my own, merely stated on behalf of the parties concerned the charges thus toned down.

Not in Nizam's Dominions

In my statement on Hindu-Muslim tension, I said I was told that the pernicious propaganda pamphlet referred to was taken up in the Nizam's Dominions.[1] Khwaja Saheb Hassan Nizami, on reading the statement, forwarded the following telegram to me:

> For the sake of Islam, Hindu-Muslim Unity, and your beloved personality, I am ready to accept your advice regarding the contents of my pamphlet *Dai ye Islam* about which you have complained in your Press message provided it does not affect the work of preaching Islam, uplifting, reforming and organizing the Mussalmans and counteracting the open and secret efforts of Arya Samaj, which work I am religiously bound to carry on. I had already taken off much of the so-called objectionable matter from the later editions of the pamphlet and am willing now to still more improve the future editions in reverence to your wishes. Kindly let me know your suggestions after reading the latest Urdu edition of the pamphlet carefully and not its Hindi translations which have been published only to create misapprehension and to secure sympathies.

[1] *Vide* p. 150.

He followed up the wire with a letter couched in similar terms; and last week he paid me the honour of visiting me and tendering a personal explanation. He told me that all the charges levelled against him as to kidnapping of children, etc., were totally without foundation and that his motive in publishing the pamphlet was not as I had interpreted it. Unfortunately, the visit happened to be when I was observing silence. I was, therefore, unable to give him my opinion on his pamphlet. The Khwaja Saheb was most anxious that I should publish his assurance about the propaganda in His Exalted Highness's Dominions. I have, therefore, gladly published the telegram and the purport of the interview. I must, however, state that the information about the alleged propaganda was given to me by reliable men. I have received also letters confirming the same information. And my assistants tell me that allegations of the same nature constantly appear in the vernacular Press. In the absence, therefore, of any direct knowledge of the state of affairs in the Nizam's Dominions, I can but give both the versions without committing myself to any opinion. I shall certainly publish with pleasure anything the authorities in H.E.H.'s Dominions may have to say in the matter.

So far as the Khwaja Saheb's pamphlet is concerned, while it is admirable that he is ready to make such revision as may be consistent with his faith, what is wanted is something more and something different. In spite of the Khwaja Saheb's repudiation of bad motives, the pamphlet which I have read in the original does lend itself to the construction I have placed upon it. The Mussalman friends to whom I have shown the pamphlet agree with my interpretation. It is, therefore, not enough that, even if I was so minded, the Khwaja Saheb should amend his pamphlet as I may suggest. What is required is for him to see the error of his thought and to recognize that he has really done an ill-service to Islam by suggesting questionable methods of propaganda. He should, therefore, revise the pamphlet radically in the light of what is permissible and praiseworthy in Islamic propaganda. Needless to say that I appreciate the readiness with which the Khwaja Saheb has come forward with his explanation and vowed his solicitude for Hindu-Muslim unity.

News to Me

A correspondent says that I am reported to have said that: 'It is better that one cow be sacrificed rather than seven goats.' He then asks me to disown or endorse the statement and, in the

latter case, to justify it. I do not recollect having made any such statement as the correspondent refers to. And whoever has heard me make such a statement will oblige me by reminding me of the occasion. According to my correspondent I am supposed to have made the statement as editor of *Young India*. If so, there should be no difficulty about confronting me with it. But what I am likely to have said or written is that, if I could non-violently persuade people, I would have them to save the goat just as well as I would have people to save the cow. As I have said before in these pages, for me the cow is the purest type of sub-human life. She pleads before us on behalf of the whole of the sub-human species for justice to it at the hands of man, the first among all that lives. She seems to speak to us through her eyes (let the reader look at them with my faith), 'You are not appointed over us to kill us and eat our flesh or otherwise ill-treat us, but to be our friend and guardian.'

Well Done, Delhi

So Delhi has taken the lead in forming an arbitration board in the matter of Hindu-Muslim tension. Only two years ago, one felt absolutely secure of Hindu-Muslim unity in Delhi where Hakim Saheb was the uncrowned king and where Swami Shraddhanandji was privileged to address Mussalmans in the Jumma Masjid. Surely it should not be beyond the joint ability of Hindus and Mussalmans to establish a lasting peace in Delhi. If a central place like Delhi can secure such peace, the other places will, I have no doubt, follow suit. I have not the heart to reproduce for the edification of the reader all the pestilential literature that I have received from Delhi, each party painting the other in the most lurid colours. The reader may be assured, however, that all that I have adumbrated in my statement is to be found in that literature. It would be a great blessing if the parties concerned will but bring their charges to the notice of the board and get from it an authoritative pronouncement.

Sikh Self-Restraint

The Sikhs of Calcutta deserve the warmest congratulations of the public for the wonderful self-restraint exhibited by them under the gravest provocation. Some of them were cruelly murdered by the howling, suspicious crowd in Calcutta on utterly groundless suspicion. The Sikhs everywhere are quite capable of taking care of themselves and well able to take reprisals if they wish to. But, on the occasion in question, they kept themselves perfectly cool. Being brave, they realized that the mischief had no racial

taint in it. The crowd in its superstitious credulity would have murdered with equal indifference members of any other community if they had suspected them. The Sikhs of Calcutta have set us an example of correct conduct on occasions of trial and provocation.

Official Delay

The reader will remember that, on seeing the Nabha State Administrator's reply to me, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Administrator repudiating the suggestion that his release and that of his companions, of whom Acharya Gidwani was one, was conditional.[1] Not having heard from the Administrator, the Pandit sent by way of reminder on the 19th June (his first letter was sent on the 24th May last) the following letter:

> I sent you a letter under registered cover on the 24th May and requested you to supply me with copies of the order suspending Principal Gidwani's, Mr. K. Santanam's and my sentences and any other order relating to us issued at the time. I have not yet received a reply to my letter, nor have I received the copies asked for.
>
> I have no doubt whatever that the statement you made in your letter to the Editor, *Young India*, that Principal Gidwani, Mr. Santanam and I were discharged conditionally is wholly incorrect and a reference to the orders and other papers must have convinced you of this. I trust that, being convinced of this, you will take early steps to correct your previous statement and make it clear that Principal Gidwani, Mr. Santanam and I were unconditionally released. There can thus be no question of Principal Gidwani being sent to jail without trial or sentence because he is said to have broken a condition which was never made.
>
> I would again request you to let me have a copy of the suspension order. I should also like to know definitely if Nabha State is supposed to be out of bounds for me and if so, under what order. I have no immediate wish to go to Nabha, but I should like to know what kind of a welcome awaits me there in case I am moved by a desire to visit the State.

Let us hope that there will be no further delay in answering the straight question put by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. There is as a rule undue delay on the part of officials in answering public inquiries, especially when such inquiries are likely to be embarrassing. If no reply is forthcoming or, if an unsatisfactory reply is sent, Pandit Nehru (jun.) and Mr. Santanam may have to ask the Working Committee to let them challenge arrest. Such a step may become necessary even as a matter of duty towards a comrade. The last paragraph of the Pandit's letter evidently fore-

[1] *Vide* p. 185.

shadows a challenge on his part. It is preposterous that Acharya Gidwani should be kept in prison, even though with him there was no question of civil disobedience when he entered the Nabha territory at the time of Jaito shooting. He did so, as we know from the impartial testimony of Mr. Zimand, in obedience to a call of humanity.

Municipalities

A local Congress secretary writes:

> Among the persons you have urged to stand out of these (Government) institutions, you have not mentioned anything about those who have captured boards and municipalities. I know there are many among the No-changers who still maintain that the principle of N.C.O. is by no means compromised by their entering into district boards and municipalities. But in my opinion these boards are semi-Government institutions. Have they not to work under Government control? Can they bring about any effective change in the system of education or sanitation?

So far as the Congress resolutions are concerned, it is open to Congress members to enter these bodies and even become office-bearers. Indeed, a later resolution requires Congressmen to capture these bodies. In theory these bodies being under Government control fall under the category of Government institutions. But ours is specific non-co-operation directed against certain institutions only which are calculated to demoralize the most and which most sustain Government prestige. The best plan, therefore, regarding Government institutions not specifically tabooed by the Congress is to test them by the measure of service they render to the constructive programme. If they hinder it, Congressmen, it is clear to me, must leave them alone. I have had letters from several places complaining that all constructive work was stopped by reason of Congressmen having entered municipalities and district boards, and that, in some places, Congressmen had offered themselves as rival candidates. In every such case, there is no doubt that Congressmen should abstain. I cannot understand Congressmen being rivals. Congressmen are subject to discipline, and only those can offer themselves for election who are chosen for the purpose by the Congress Committee concerned. So far as the ability to control education (primary) and sanitation is concerned, generally speaking it may be said that the municipalities have substantial control over them. In any case, municipalities being largely elective bodies, there is ample scope for civil disobedience whenever the proper occasion for it arises.

A Dangerous Practice

I have just read in the columns of *The Hindu* (of 12th June) what purports to be an interview with me. I do recollect a long chat with a gentleman whom I never suspected to be an interviewer. I thought that he wanted honest doubts to be solved and, therefore, bestowed considerable attention upon him and patiently answered all his questions. As I could ill-afford the time, I should certainly have declined the honour of being interviewed at the time and at that length. I have no secrets. People who find out anything about or from me are free to report it if they like. But I do mind being misreported. If they did me the honour of showing me what they reported, I should have no objection. The so-called interview is a caricature of what I said. For instance, I am made to refer to 'every Mussalman as a vagabond'. Well, I never dreamt that every Mussalman was a vagabond. I do not consider Hakim Saheb a vagabond; nor for that matter any of my numerous Mussalman friends. I know many Mussalman bullies, but I cannot recall having met any vagabonds in the accepted sense of the term. I do not regard every Mussalman even to be a bully. I am accused of having said that 'the Government was indifferent to me and that it would be terrified if I were to undertake an all-India tour for six months.' Well, I am proud enough to think that the Government is never indifferent to what I say or do and I am humble enough not to think that it would be terrified by any tour on my part. It would, however, be terrified if a real Hindu-Muslim unity can be brought about, no matter by whom. The interviewer talks of fraud practised by a khaddar worker. The statement is an abuse of the privilege of being allowed to listen to a conversation I was having with fellow-workers. There was talk of fraud alleged to have been pactised. I do not even now know whether any was practised. I have simply picked samples of glaring inaccuracies. The 'interviewer' has, no doubt, meant well. But well-meaning friends who act irresponsibly are more harmful than ill-meaning opponents. I would urge those who visit me to spare me whilst I occupy a responsible position. When I become irresponsible, they may take any liberty they like with my doings and sayings. To those who see any 'interviews' with me, I ask them to reject them as unworthy of belief unless they are authorized by me.

Machine Spinning *v.* Hand-Spinning

A friend, who at one time swore by the spinning-wheel, says in effect:

> Your activity is useless. Why are you wasting your body and mind in dishing up old stuff in the pages of *Young India* and *Navajivan*? I can no longer read them with profit. I have found by experience that the spinning-wheel is no use. Do you know that the charkhas which people bought in the first wave of enthusiasm are rotting? They will not pay.
>
> I suggest turning your attention to something better. Substitute hand-spinning with machine-spinning. Erect a spinning-mill in every Taluka. Nationalize the profits. Only patriots should work the mills not for gain, but for love of the country. Distribute the yarn to the local weavers only. The cloth woven should be confined to the respective Talukas. You thus save waste of time and freight. To start with, organize one Taluka in this manner and you will render great service.

As the argument is specious and comes from one who has in his own way tried the charkha, I propose to examine it for the sake of those who may hold the views that the friend does. The reader does not need to be told that the scheme is as old as the khadi movement. Like the proverbial bad penny, it turns up again and again.

The friend has forgotten the central truth that the wheel furnishes occupation and a small income to the millions who must have an additional income if they are not to starve. It is not possible to put up a handloom in every home. A loom in every village, a charkha in every home is the formula. If a spinning-mill is put up in every Taluka, it will result in nationalizing the exploitation of the many by the few. All cannot be employed in a Taluka mill. Moreover, we must import the machinery needed for over 2,000 Talukas. And the experts for managing and working the mills will have to be trained. Mills cannot grow up like mushrooms, as charkhas can. The failure of a charkha is felt by nobody; the failure of a Taluka mill will mean consternation among the people of the Taluka concerned. In my opinion, the proposition advanced by the friend is utterly unsound. I have, however, suggested that, if he has faith in his scheme, he should try it. I must continue to paddle my own canoe, because nothing else attracts me. The charkha for me has a charm all its own.

I may be too dense to see its failure. I am not unwilling to be convinced of my error.

The same day that I received the friend's letter, I received another from another friend who says that he has ten years, experience of the mill industry. He has tested power-spinning and hand-weaving and is now engaged in the trade of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. He gives the palm to the last as a solution for the economic distress. I give this experience for what it is worth.

The whole experiment is in too nebulous a state for giving a firm opinion on it. But this much is clear that the spinning-wheel is today the only comforter in many a poor home to which no substitute can be taken. Of the spinning-wheel it can be truly said, as of no other:

> 'In this there is no waste of effort, there is no disappointment. Even a little of it saves one from great distress.'

Young India, 26-6-1924

161. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING[1]

AHMEDABAD,
June 27, 1924

Mr. Gandhi, who was called upon by the President to explain his position on the point of order raised by Pandit Motilal Nehru, spoke in Hindi. Mr. Gandhi said that he was not going beyond the Congress constitution in bringing forward his resolution. Articles 21 and 31 relied on by Mr. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru laid down certain conditions and those conditions, in his opinion, were not transgressed. His view was that the A.I.C.C. had full powers of the Congress, when the latter body was not in session. His resolutions did not restrict the right of the electors, but only advised the electors to do the needful.

He said that only the All-India Committee had full powers to make rules to see if members were efficiently carrying out the programme of the Congress or not. The electors had certainly the right of free and unfettered choice, but once the elections were over they could exercise no sort of control over the conduct of their representatives. Only the All-India Committee could do that. Surely it is the duty of the committee to remove every obstacle to progress in the direction of carrying out the resolutions of the Congress passed at Cocanada, which fully endorsed the Non-co-operation programme and ensure efficiency in the manner of work. If it was argued that the provincial committees had the

[1] At the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held from June 27 to 30, Gandhiji moved four resolutions. After he had moved the first resolution, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das raised a point of order on its admissibility. The latter said that "under article 21 only new matter could be considered. Unless new matter had arisen, all the rule-making powers of the Congress could be pressed into service. Under Article 31, this resolution making spinning obligatory could not be valid; for it infringed the fundamental right of electors to choose their own representatives. Further ex-officio members, like ex-presidents, were unfairly hit under this resolution and their constitutional right to be present sought to be deprived." Gandhiji's speech was reported by A.P.I. and a Special correspondent of *The Hindu*. Here both these reports have been collated. For the text of the resolution, *vide* "The Acid Test", 19-6-1924.

right to frame its own rules, imposing conditions of membership, *ipso facto* it follows the All-India Committee, which is the fountain-head of all authority, has the like powers to condition its own membership.[1]

Continuing, Mr. Gandhi said that a new situation had arisen. The Congress passed certain resolutions and the All-India Congress Committee had to see that they were carried out. As to ex-Presidents, the speaker observed that even to them some advice could be tendered. If Provincial Congress Committees would frame their own rules, the A.I.C.C. had a better and a larger right to do so. He therefore pointed [out] that his resolutions were not at all *ultra vires*.

The Hindu, 28-6-1924

162. LETTER TO A BEREAVED FATHER

June 28, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I understand from George Joseph's letter to my son that, whilst your brave son Krishnasamy is in jail, you have lost your daughter. I understand, too, that one of your sons is insane. Being father of four sons myself, I can understand your condition in your bereavement. Our trust in God is proved only when we are able to bear such grief and greater with resignation. May He give you the strength you need. When I was learning Tamil in the South African jails, I came across this beautiful Tamil saying, "God is the sole help of those who are helpless."[2] Now I have forgotten much of my Tamil, but the music of the above saying still rings in my ears. It often assists me. May it do likewise to you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 6833

[1] This paragraph has been extracted from the report by a special correspondent of *The Hindu*.

[2] Gandhiji writes here in Tamil script: *dikkatravarku deivame tunai*.

163. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING

AHMEDABAD,
June 28, 1924

FRIENDS,

It was with a full sense of responsibility that I took it upon myself to draft these resolutions and submit them before you. Fortunately or unfortunately, I have been able to obtain the opinion of a majority of the Working Committee[1] in favour of accepting these resolutions. Practically everything I had to say about them I have already said in *Young India*. I have, therefore, nothing in particular to say while moving them. I am not unmindful of the fact that the resolutions which I propose to move have created a serious difference of opinion and led to much bitterness, and I am also aware that, because of these differences of opinion, a time may come when we may have to part company with co-workers. I have used the word "co-workers" on purpose because "friendship" is a cord that never snaps, no matter what the strain upon it. That is its nature. And I may tell you that though you may see Deshbandhu, Pandit Motilal, Maulana Azad and many others ranged against me today, that is not likely to affect the bond of friendship between us. Anyone who wants to take up public work has no choice but humbly though firmly to face situations when he may have to part company with the closest of his friends and to seek new co-workers as occasion may require. Malaviyaji and I are in opposite camps and yet no one can say that this has ever affected our friendship in the least.

It is a grave error to hold that, when a difference of opinion arises between two friends, their friendship too must break off. Of course, such difference will mean an end of their working together. However, no matter what may be said about our being able to work together, history will surely record that our friendship remained unaffected.

I request you to consider my resolutions in this spirit. Yesterday I got some idea of the situation which prevails in the country. I have practised law for many years and I know from experience that, when people have once made up their minds on any subject, they do not find it very difficult to discover legal niceties

[1] Which met on June 26

either in favour of or against a proposition. For this same reason, I even admit that it would not be surprising if the argument I have advanced to show that my resolutions are in order was coloured by my views on the subject. I am also prepared to admit that those who differ from me and believe that my resolutions violate the rules of the Congress constitution and are, therefore, out of order, do so quite honestly.

Shri Srinivasa Iyengar[1] and I are on intimate terms with each other. I can say that the closest friendship exists between us. He came to me this morning and asked me: "Did you not say somewhere that, if there are equal votes on either side, you will leave the Congress?" I did say this and yet I insist on moving this resolution, for I am eager to know where you, the whole country and I stand. If I feel that this will lead to nothing but bitterness and that even those who are with me have voted in my favour out of their loyalty to me, I may even break off my connection with the Congress.

I find myself in a difficult situation. Today the country expects me to lead it. I must admit that, under certain conditions, I may even be able to take up the leadership. But, then, I must look for the means and the instruments which I require. That is the reason for my moving these resolutions even at the risk of creating a split in the country today and of parting company with the dearest of friends.

But, in the situation prevailing in the country today, I feel myself altogether at sea. And so you must either choose another leader or accept my conditions. I am convinced that there is no other way out than this. No one is impelled without reason deliberately to violate a constitution, as I am doing in the third resolution[2]. I have stated that a constitution should be held sacred only as long as it helps us to progress. When it becomes instrumental in holding us back and emasculating us, we certainly cannot allow it to go on doing it. It is true that, if the Congress is a living organization, it will punish you for violating the constitution thus. I say that, if it does that and expels us, we should have the courage to leave and make room for better servants. If, however, we believe that we shall not be able to bring swaraj nearer unless we march ahead, even trampling underfoot the present

[1] S. Srinivasa Iyengar (1874-1941); lawyer and Congress leader of Madras; presided over the Gauhati session of the Congress, 1926; elected to Central Assembly, 1926

[2] Relating to election of delegates

constitution, then it becomes our sacred duty to lay it aside and to violate it. At the same time, when I saw that the Working Committee was ready to place my resolutions before the Congress as its own recommendations, I made some changes in my third resolution.

I have been asking myself since 3 o'clock this morning what my duty is at the present juncture. I considered the matter from all points of view, and saw that it was evident from the votes cast on Panditji's[1] resolution opposing me on constitutional grounds that, except Bengal, most of the other provinces were in favour of adopting this realistic programme. The voting yesterday was in fact a true index of the position. If it gives a correct picture of how the A.I.C.C. feels in the matter, I have rightly drawn the conclusion that a majority of the provinces want this resolution. I, therefore, asked myself if it was possible to unite the provinces. Khadi is a thing of no ordinary power. Not because we have started using khadi, but because it has been revived among us as a symbol of something which we cannot have through any other means; it is only khadi which can unite us completely at the present hour. It is only through it that we can forge a close bond with the masses in the country. You will not succeed in uniting the country by entering the Councils or practising in the courts.

Only yesterday, an Indian magistrate sent a young non-co-operator to prison. I want to see a thousand young men come forward and face with contempt the repression by this Government which is out to crush us. I am ready to sacrifice ten thousand Pragjis[2] in the country's struggle, because I see that it is necessary for us thus to bring into contempt the courts of this Government. I want to say unhesitatingly that, if we can do so, it will be impossible for the bureaucracy so arrogantly to trample upon public sentiment. I think it is necessary for us to show to the Government that it will not be able to crush us—then it will not dare even to make the attempt.

Panditji also knows that the Councils will not suffice to win swaraj. In his opinion, they are not everything. He too wants the whole country to stand behind him. He wants the entire people fired with the spirit of civil disobedience standing behind him in order to make his work in the Councils effective. I tell you that, in this matter, his work there cannot do much. Maybe

[1] Motilal Nehru

[2] Pragji Desai was sentenced to imprisonment for two years and three months in June 1924.

the Councils play an important part in the lives of some of us but, from the point of view of the life of thirty crores of people, they do not count at all. And I have been entreating you to consider this resolution from the point of view of these crores. Are you eager to infuse life into the lives of these millions of our brothers and sisters? These poor people living in the villages, do you not wish to go into their midst and organize them properly? Just imagine 5,000 persons, instead of haranguing crowds at big meetings, going into villages as spinners and carders and spinning and carding themselves, asking the people to spin for the sake of the country. You cannot visualize this condition unless you have faith and sharpness of intellect. The spinning-wheel is a *kamadhenu*[1] which will unite you with the thirty crores of the country. And if you want to establish such a close bond with them, you must pass this test.

Just think of it, it is only the spinning-wheel which brings us into contact with the lowest of our countrymen. I do not wish to make a fetish of the spinning-wheel. If I come to see that it is an impediment in the winning of swaraj, I shall immediately set fire to it. That way I am an iconoclast, and in that sense a Muslim. And yet, I am an idolator too. If I feel that even a stone from the bed of the Narmada river helps me to concentrate my attention on my chosen god, I would certainly keep it and worship it. In that sense I am a Hindu.

Another friend of mine tells me that I should not thus treat the spinning-wheel as a sort of rosary with which to say one's prayers. I do admit that for me the spinning-wheel certainly serves as a prayer-wheel. And I am eager to see you all infected with the same faith in the spinning-wheel which I have. If the object of your faith is only Gandhi and not the spinning-wheel, you may be sure that you have been trying to embrace pure smoke. What will it mean if you merely throw 2,000 yards of yarn at me? I shall not be satisfied with that. That way, yarn sent even by one person will only serve for a rope to hang me by. But I certainly do not wish to die that way. Only for the country I want to live and to die, die as the country's purest man—that is my aspiration. I wish to see you filled with such faith and only if you have it, should you vote in my favour. Remember that you have to examine your faith, not mine. What is needed is your faith.

Let me now address a few words to those who wish to vote against me. Some have alleged that in presenting this resolution

[1] A mythical cow which yielded whatever was asked of her

I have followed the ways of the British bureaucracy. We are angry with the bureaucracy because it has not been set up by us, its members are not appointed by us. If, however, we purposely lay down some rules for our conduct so that we may proceed systematically, and regard such rules as binding on us, why should we be angry about that? Moreover, what I am placing before you today is a principle that has held good from time immemorial, and it is that we should act as we speak and do as we say. If we want to build up a strong and indomitable nation, capable of firm determination, we must impose upon ourselves the strictest rules of discipline. Let anyone go to a military camp and look at the position there. I have been to such a camp and have also worked there. In these camps, you may have to starve for days, you may be given dirty water which you cannot easily bring yourself to drink, you may sometimes have to bear even being kicked by officials, and do it all with a smiling face! And this is true of military camps where mercenary soldiers fight. We, on the other hand, have come forward as volunteers to serve the country; we are the elected representatives of the people. In our case, then, how much more strictly applicable should these military rules be considered? How can we ever resent imposition of rules of discipline? If as a matter of conscience you are opposed to this type of discipline, you had better leave the organization of your own accord and try to win over the public opinion in the country to your side. But you must know that, once a resolution is passed, it is your sacred duty to act whole-heartedly upon it. Even the tallest among us must bow before that duty.

If we are not well prepared, if we are divided, then, even assuming that the British are inclined to grant us swaraj right now, there will be no end to quarrels and disagreements among us. I want to tell you that, when the British have left, if the Afghans or the Japanese are to come in their place, all our talk of our fitness for swaraj and all our efforts would be worthless. I want you to wrest swaraj with your own efforts, and not get it as a gift from the British. I do not care in the least what the British Parliament says about us, nor do I care what European public opinion thinks about our activities. But I am very much interested indeed to know what the man in the street here says about us.

I assure you that, if we but reflect a little, we shall see that this programme is the quickest that can be imagined. Take it that you will have swaraj the moment this programme is implemented. You had carried it out to some extent in the historic year, 1920-21. Everyone knows what impact it had. All this, to

be sure, was not the result entirely of Gandhi's effort. In fact, Gandhi has a number of fads and, had he placed them all before the people, the latter would have simply laughed him out. Gandhi has merely felt the pulse of the nation. He is ready to lay down his life for his programme. If you reject me today, you will see me walk out cheerfully, with no complaint, no bitterness. Staying outside, I shall try and raise an independent organization or body, I will not place obstacles in your way. I do not believe in obstructive tactics. I believe only in the purest, cleanest non-co-operation, and will non-co-operate with you.

If you wish to pass this resolution by a majority, calculate very carefully the price you have to pay. You will have to give to the Khadi Association[1] a minimum of 2,000 yards of yarn every month. That means that you, too, will have to be crazy over the spinning-wheel, as I am. If your faith is not so intense, you should certainly throw out this resolution. If any of you feel that by taking this step we shall be committing suicide, they should dissociate themselves from it and try to win over the Congress to their view at the next session. Surely, the Congress does not belong to any one person. It will be in the hands of anyone who serves the country best. It has been said that I am trying to impose my will in the manner of a dictator by getting this resolution passed. As long as I have not lost my balance, I do not mind others calling me even a dictator. Personally, I regard myself but as an humble servant of the country. But, then, there are servants who undertake to serve only on certain terms and their terms may sometimes seem dictatorial to others.

In God's name and with Him as witness, I submit my terms before you and assure you that in doing so I have no aim in view except your service.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-7-1924

[1] The reference is to the All-India Spinners' Association.

164. *SPEECH AND RESOLUTION ON PENAL CLAUSE*[1]

AHMEDABAD,
June 28, 1924

Tne President said that the motion proposed by him was carried only by 67 against 37. The Swarajists who left the meeting had not voted. If their votes were also added, at the most it gave him only a narrow majority. He therefore advised the meeting to rescind the penal clause. It was suggested by one of those present that it would not be in the spirit of the constitution.[2]

Mr. Gandhi, replying, reminded the House of a precedent at the Amritsar Congress whose Subjects Committee had passed a motion on the subject of disorders by the Punjab mob during the Rowlatt Act agitation days, but later on, on his plea, rescinded the original motion almost immediately.[3]

In view of the fact that certain members, whilst proceedings of the All-India Congress Committee were going on, deemed it necessary to withdraw from the Committee by reason of their resentment to the penalty clause in the obligatory spinning resolution; and in view of the fact that the said penalty clause of the resolution was carried only by 67 against 37 votes, and further, in view of the fact that the said clause would have been defeated if the votes of withdrawal had been given against it, this Committee considers it proper and advisable to remove the penalty clause of the resolution with the introductory clause.[4]

The Hindu, 29-6-1924

[1] After Gandhiji had spoken (*vide* the preceding item), an amendment to delete the penal clause was defeated and the original resolution was carried. The Committee formally adjourned, but immediately met informally under Gandhiji's presidentship.

[2] Shuaib Qureshi then said that it would not add to the dignity of the House to rescind its own motion passed but a few minutes earlier. The House, in his opinion, would be creating a bad precedent by accepting Gandhiji's advice.

[3] Gandhiji was supported by Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The meeting then resolved itself into a formal meeting which was presided over by Mahomed Ali as ex-officio president. Gandhiji then moved the resolution which follows.

[4] The motion was seconded by Vallabhbhai Patel and the A.I.C.C. was adjourned till 8.30 a.m. the next day.

165. SOME QUESTIONS

1. What should we do if our co-workers of set purpose behave badly towards us, dislike us without cause and burn with envy?

I quote this and such other questions from letters which I have been receiving. We should behave correctly towards one who behaves badly towards us, should like one who dislikes us and love one who envies us. I do not know any other way in which one can live in peace in this world. If one decides to live thus, such behaviour becomes easy and natural by and by. When we cannot behave in this straightforward manner, we should keep aloof from others.

2. What should we do if, in an ordinary matter, there is a difference of opinion and each one wants to have his way?

That this should happen suggests lack of experience of community life. If everyone follows his own way, we should join him whose way we consider best, so that there will be two co-workers at any rate. If they are truthful, firm and humble, others will come and join them of their own accord. He who does not yield to persuasion will submit when he has no choice left.

3. If a worker feels convinced that a certain other worker really harms the institution, what should he do?

He should humbly point out to that worker his mistake. If the latter does not see it, he should leave that institution and save himself from being a party to the mischief. If one acts frankly in this manner, all the three—the institution, the one who harms it and the one who notices it—will benefit.

4. What should one do when one finds the chief worker in a locality to be immoral?

This is a delicate and serious question. A leader has the eyes of all fixed on him. Some among these may have even jaundiced eyes. An idler has no interest except to observe the faults of others. We should, therefore, never credit such rumours. If we believed everything alleged against all leaders, not one person whose company we would welcome would be left to work with us. All human beings have their weaknesses. As Tulsidas says, all physical objects and all living creatures partake of evil. The saint, discriminating like the swan, leaves aside the water, the evil, the impurity, and drinks in the milk, the virtue. But we cannot shut our eyes to what is there before us. What should we do when we have not

been looking for something ourselves but, without our searching for it, we are confronted with irrefutable evidence, with ocular proof? If we have courage and humility, we should certainly speak to the leader about the matter and ask him to give up his leadership. If he refuses, we should state the fact as our reason and leave him.

This raises an important issue. How can we even think of looking into a leader's private life until he commits a mistake in his public life? If we start doing that, we become watchmen of every leader's moral character. In these circumstances, a leader would find his life bitter as poison. May we not, therefore, regard a leader's private life as quite distinct from his public life and remain indifferent to it? Ordinarily, such an argument would perhaps be correct, but it does not at all apply to our struggle. We have come to look upon it as a movement of self-purification. Through it we hope to destroy a wicked political system. Hence both our means and our workers must be pure. In our struggle we cannot make a distinction between one's private life and public life. On the contrary, we know that one's private life has great effect on one's public work. We are reformers, and it is an ancient and correct belief that a reformer's private life ought to be pure. Let us take an example. We move among simple-minded villagers. Some village communities are not aware of the difference between morality and immorality. They welcome us with confidence. Their wives, daughters and sisters go to the workers with complete freedom. If even one worker of ours casts a lustful eye on them, what would happen? It is quite evident that the most important asset in this work of reform is the purity of every worker's private life. If impurity enters the life of our workers, our cause will itself sink like a frail paper boat, drown us too and frighten off the people. I have received some letters about such evil having affected certain workers of ours. I do not know how much of it is true and how much false.

A worker in Kutch who had been doing khadi propaganda work was guilty of a serious error. Everyone came to know of his immoral conduct. The cause received a great blow. The worker had to leave the place. I have heard that now he is living in solitude to atone for his error. If he has really repented, he can still resume service some day. But the harm wrought by his immoral conduct cannot be undone.

I, therefore, make this humble request to every worker. Be on your guard. If you have no self-restraint, if there is wickedness in your eyes, your ears and your hands, if your legs take you to

places you should not visit—run away, do penance and give up the work of service. Rest assured that you will render true service by purifying yourself. Do not add one more sin to your former one by continuing public work. Remember always that you are in the midst of a fire. If you let your armour develop even the smallest chink, the fire will enter through it and burn you up. Why should he who has no control over his own mind think at all of controlling others?

5. Workers have developed love of comforts. They want a conveyance on every occasion and have no use for a bullock-cart if they get a horse-drawn carriage, and no use for either if they get a motor-car.

Being an invalid myself, my pen is without its old vigour in criticizing people wanting conveyances. Even so, I recall to mind, and desire readers to recall, the sacred days of the Kheda agitation and would say that the rule should be just the other way round. As long as our legs can serve, we should not think of a vehicle at all. Man has no better horses than his two legs. If a bullock-cart is available, we should not think of a horse-carriage, and if a horse-carriage is available, we should avoid using a motor-car. When the occasion is urgent enough to require the use of a car, the person in charge of us will tell us. Then we may certainly use a car. But, left to ourselves we should always prefer the use of our legs. We want thousands of workers. If all of them demand horse-carriages, our pilgrim-band will never reach Dwarka!

6. What if the workers expect feasts wherever they go?

If they do, they should give up their jobs. I hear that some villages actually take fright at the very mention of the word volunteer or worker. As the workers demanded luxuries such as rich meals, cold water and soft beds, the poor villagers had to serve the workers instead of being served by them.

A worker should so behave that he would never be a burden to the village. He should carry with him food which would not become stale. He should expect only clean water, always carrying his own drinking-pot, so that, when he comes to a lake, river or well, he would himself go and fill it. He should lie down at any spot where he finds the ground clean. A bed would be too much for him. He should not ask to be served, as he is out himself to serve. He should not, therefore, feel disappointed when he is not properly served, that is, feasted. He goes among people, not to order them, but to obey their orders. He should, accordingly, talk to everyone most humbly. He likes to serve; service has become his life's bread. He should, therefore,

continue to serve even if he receives abuses in return. "He has right knowledge who returns good for evil," says an experienced and practical-minded poet. Every worker should have right knowledge in this sense. We have moved about in Gujarat and other parts, but have not achieved any great success because, though we regard ourselves as servants, we have made others look upon us as leaders. Though we enlisted ourselves as workers, we have become persons who take work from others.

I have been saying that we should not become a burden to the villages. No one should understand this to mean that we should put up with insanitary conditions. I know a number of indolent workers who are themselves very dirty and who foul the clean places which they visit. In the same way, he who is a servant must preserve inner purity right to the moment of death; he must also preserve outward cleanliness. His clothes may have fifty patches on them, but they must be clean. His drinking-pot should be clean as a looking-glass. If he stops at a place which is dirty, he will clean it and so teach a lesson in cleanliness to the people. If the latrine is dirty, he will clean it himself. If he goes to the outskirts of the village to answer the call of nature, he should carry with him a small pick-axe and use it before and after defecation. If only we cover excreta with earth, the nuisance of flies and other insects will be less and public health will improve. A worker ought to make himself familiar with the rules of hygiene.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 29-6-1924

166. *IN CASE OF DACOITY*

When incidents of dacoity in Ghatkopar[1] increased, the inhabitants of the place got frightened. In such an atmosphere people everywhere get frightened. Now the Municipality has taken necessary steps and, with the beginning of the rainy season, escape has become less easy for the dacoits, and so the fear of dacoity has also lessened. Hence there is no need to consider what immediate steps the people of Ghatkopar should devise.

But an increase in the police force is not the right remedy. Such measures have always been taken in the past and yet dacoities have not ceased. In America, which is considered very advanced, robbery is committed on running trains and daring thieves manage

[1] A suburb of Bombay

sometimes to waylay and rob people on the highway in broad daylight. Thefts, of course, are a common occurrence. Many expert observers believe that crime has increased along with the advance of civilization. All that has happened is that the nature of crimes has changed. Along with the people, crimes too become more refined. Along with greater skill in the detection of crimes, the capacity to conceal them also grows. In the result, therefore, we remain where we were.

Let us see where and how people become dacoits. No one robs sadhus who live in forests and have no possessions. And what would anyone rob them of ? Robbers look for money. If people set a limit to their love of money, the number of robberies will also decrease. If all people possess more or less equal wealth, robberies will cease. But we may take it that we shall see no such happy consummation in this age.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to bear this principle in mind. We may not set a limit to our love of money, but we must make an effort to understand the condition of dacoits. If they are without means of living, we should offer them work; if they have made dacoity their profession, we should explain its immorality to them. This is the work of reformers and, therefore, the sadhus should be the fittest to undertake it. I do not mean sadhus who wear ochre robes and go about begging, but those whose hearts are dyed in ochre and who have dedicated themselves to service of others.

The work of reform cannot be taken up when dacoits visit us. It must commence from today. Such work requires little money, or rather none at all and few men. Once the movement has started, it will go on. There are instances of reformers in modern times having effected such reforms. Sahajanand[1], Chaitanya[2], Ramakrishna[3] and others have done so on a big scale. Let no one ridicule the reform they brought about by thinking or saying that it did not endure or that the reformers did not succeed in putting an end to dacoities. Such reforms are not extensive because they are for the most part limited in scope.

We think that there is no need to introduce such reforms among the wealthy. Really speaking, the depredations of dacoits are a reflection of the theft committed by the rich. The subtle theft of

[1] 1781-1830; founder of the Swaminarayan sect

[2] 16th-century Hindu religious reformer of Bengal who taught that caste was subordinate to faith in Lord Krishna

[3] 19th-century religious reformer who preached equality of men and service to the poor and the outcaste

the latter becomes, with the dacoits, physical robbery. The reformer, therefore, will have to take in hand both the rich and the poor, the subtle dacoit and the one who commits physical robbery. Only then can the desired results be achieved. This is the work of *acharyas*[1], fakirs, sannyasis and the like. They have it in them to become the true protectors and guardians of the morality of society, and it is their job, therefore, to end the evil of dacoity.

While such reforms are going on, dacoities will of course continue. In trying to effect such reforms, one should not expect quick results. They come about slowly. Meanwhile, what should the rich do to protect their property?

With police help, they do succeed in getting a measure of protection. It has become a practice to hold the Government responsible for all shortcomings and evils. It is a laudable attitude and on the whole right. Since we are under foreign rule today, we find it easy to blame the Government. When there is swaraj tomorrow, even then we shall be imperfect and we shall abuse the swaraj Government. But we ourselves shall be the swaraj Government and, therefore, to cultivate the habit of not blaming the present-day Government should be regarded as a training for swaraj. To blame the Government alone for the dacoities which take place is a confession of our weakness. How many policemen can the Government maintain to protect people living in forests? How can a people who can never protect themselves ever enjoy swaraj? A weak people will always be doomed to slavery. Hence people everywhere must make their own arrangements for their protection. From this point of view, people of suburbs like Ghatkopar, in fact people all over the country, should train themselves for self-defence. It is necessary for young people from every house to take training in self-defence. We can have protection through hired men, but that method is extremely dangerous. If middle-class people, instead of protecting themselves, engage others for the job, they will only be spending money to create masters. Those who work for wealth and possessions must be ready to defend themselves.

My criticism so far applies both to Hindus and to Muslims. The Hindus have difficulties on account of the caste system, but their attitude is mistaken. Every man must have all the four qualities—knowledge, valour, the commercial instinct and readiness for service. *Varnashrama* can only mean that each caste should have in outstanding measure its special quality and that it should earn

[1] Spiritual preceptors

its livelihood through that quality. That is to say, a Brahmin earns his right to a handful of *bajra* by imparting knowledge, a Kshatriya by defending, a Vaisya by engaging in trade, etc., and a Sudra by rendering service. But a man who is unable to protect himself at a time of crisis is an incomplete man. He is a burden to society. One can defend oneself by soul-force or physical force. Anyone who has not cultivated soul-force is in duty bound to defend himself and his people by means of physical force. Both those who rely on soul-force and those who rely on physical force will have to learn to face death. The man of soul-force will treat his body as of no worth and lay down his life without using force against the dacoits, whereas the other will die killing. Everyone may not be ready to cultivate soul-force. Moreover, "seeker of wealth" and "seeker of the *atman*" mean quite opposite things. The former can never become a seeker of the *atman* till he has given up his love of money. But either of them will be a coward if he runs away in the face of danger. Hence, one should cultivate the strength for self-defence to the best of one's ability. It is the clear duty of those living in suburbs like Ghatkopar that they themselves, that is, some members of their families, take training in personally fighting the dacoits.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 29-6-1924

167. I ACCEPT DEFEAT

Sometimes people want to meet me and discuss the Shastras with me. "Others may say or do what they like with regard to untouchability, but you should not so much as even mention the subject, for you appeal to people in the name of religion and so people get misled by you. If the Shastras look upon untouchability as a sin, prove that by citing texts. Else I can show by a reference to the Vedas that they fully support untouchability. If untouchability disappears, the *Sanatana Dharma*[1] will die out." This is what a swami called on me to tell me.

I was taken aback. I merely replied: "I always consider myself worsted in argument. I cannot argue about the Shastras with you, I admit immediately that I would be defeated in any such argument with you. All the same, I will go on saying that untouchability is a great sin in Hinduism." I could not, of course,

[1] Literally, the eternal dharma, a name applied to orthodox Hinduism

satisfy the swami by this reply. I felt quite satisfied. I felt that I had saved myself by this brief reply. When the swami called, I was engaged in my daily work of writing for the pleasure of readers of *Young India* and *Navajivan* and was not ready to waste even a single moment in talk. In the circumstances, I thought a simple refusal would be the best way out. The practical wisdom taught by our forefathers sufficed for me. I have often acted on the saying, "A determined refusal will save one from thirty-six diseases"[1], and felt that it can save us not from thirty-six but thirty-six hundred diseases.

The art of interpreting the Shastras is like a lawyer's calling. Who has not observed that people who argue about the Shastras can prove that black is white? Many experts in the Vedas find authority in them for all sorts of things. And others prove exactly the opposite about things known by the very same names.

To other ordinary people like me I wish to show a simple way which I have followed. After studying all religions, I have discovered their highest common factor. Some principles seem to be immutable which have not been contradicted by experience. A devotee like Tulsidas declared in just half a couplet: "Compassion is the life of dharma." "There is no dharma other than truth" is another immutable saying. No religion has repudiated these texts. Every religious principle claiming authority from the Shastras should be tested on the anvil of truth with the hammer of compassion. If it is found hard enough and does not break, it should be accepted as correct, else we should say "Not this, not this" to a thousand experts in the Shastras. In the words of Akha, which proceed from experience, discussion about the Shastras is a "dark well". Anyone who falls into it will never be able to swim and get out of it, try as hard as he might. There is but one *atman*. It inhabits every body. Can anyone, then, be an untouchable?

Let us also understand the meaning of untouchability. A woman in menses, a man back from the cremation ground, a man who has not cleaned himself after removing stools, these are persons with whom contact is avoided. We practise untouchability in this sense even in regard to our parents. If, however, a son does not attend on his ailing mother who happens to be in her menses, though by doing so he will become untouchable for the time being, he will go to hell. All who carry night-soil are *Antyajas*. If they do not bathe after doing their work, we may, if we like, bathe on touching them, but to create on the basis of this practical idea an *Antyaja*

[1] Gujarati saying

community, to confine it to a locality reserved for it, to shun contact with its members more than we do with animals, not to bother even whether they live or die, to throw at them left-overs or rotten eatables, to refuse to teach their children, not to help them to get treatment when they fall ill, not to permit them to enter temples or draw water from a well, this simply cannot be dharma, it can only be the opposite. By looking upon these practices as an essential part of Hinduism, we are only destroying the Hindu religion.

Untouchability of this kind will mean suicide. It is the extreme limit of intolerance. I have not the ghost of a doubt that it is the primary dharma of every Hindu to try to eradicate it and die in the attempt.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-6-1924

168. PRAGJI AND SURAT

O Surat, fallen on unhappy days, you are wailing now.

The Magistrate of Surat has invited Pragji Khandubhai Desai to be a Government guest for two years and three months. He has now become my neighbour.[1] Only the Government knows how long he will enjoy the feasts of Sabarmati Jail.

If Pragji is a pure satyagrahi, he has lost nothing. In fact, he has been saved from trouble. Even then, I am certain he can render the country the highest service. All I can do is to congratulate him.

Since I do not have with me the article for which he has been sentenced, I can say nothing definite. True congratulations are due only to one who is imprisoned though he is pure as crystal. There is no room, in such a case, for delusion.

I know, however, that the Government which has sent Pragji to jail is not impartial. I am vain enough to believe that the Government would not have sent me to jail if I had written the article which Pragji did, but I can also say, without being guilty of vanity, that it will not send Shastriar to jail for writing such an article. An Englishman who might write even more strongly would receive congratulations from the Government. Hence, from a general point of view, Pragji is quite innocent. I know that he had no intention at all of inciting people to wrong courses. On the whole, therefore, he is bound to profit from what has happened.

[1] The jail was near Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati.

Pragji is a seasoned jail-bird. He has had sufficient experience of jail life in South Africa. He is not likely to be daunted by hardships. His patriotism is of a high order.

That being so, why have I quoted at the top the line about Surat by poet Narmadashankar[1]? It is because Surat seems to have lost its light. Pragji is a well-known worker of Surat. It is not as if he was not known there. One of two results should have followed the imprisonment of a person like Pragji: either a large number of people would have followed him to jail—they could have if they had wanted to—or they would have taken up constructive work. Actually, however, Surat seems to have gone to sleep. She still takes no notice of the demand for Rs. 40,000 which has been presented to her.[2] The national school there is in the condition of Trishanku[3]. The treasury of the Surat [District] Congress Committee is empty.

It is my prayer that the workers of Surat should be awake and rouse the people there. I cannot bear to think that Surat has lost its light.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-6-1924

169. GOD OR NATURE TO BLAME?

A correspondent writes:[4]

If we accept the meaning which this correspondent gives to the term "Nature", I shall have to retain the word "God" in my reply to Maulana Mahomed Ali on the occasion in question. In case of a motor-car accident, everyone would rush to the help of the wounded, checking the urge to answer even a call of nature. It does not require a poor "mahatma" like me to do that. I believe, moreover, that controlling the call of nature at such a time will not have an adverse effect, because the changes which take place in the body in virtue of the feeling of compassion counteract the harmful effects of inhibition. Besides, one who knows the laws of

[1] 19th-century Gujarati poet famed for his patriotic compositions

[2] *Vide* "Surat District", 15-6-1924.

[3] Mythological hero who, being unsuccessful in his attempt to reach heaven, had to remain helplessly hanging in space.

[4] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that, in reply to Mahomed Ali's question, "Why such illness to a man like you?", Gandhiji should have said, "I must have committed an offence against Nature" and not, "I must have committed a sin against God."

Nature can also, by fasting, prevent the harmful consequences of his action.

My meaning, therefore, would not have been conveyed merely by the word "Nature" in the sense in which it has been employed by the correspondent.

I cannot, for the sake of my "importance" at any rate, conceal my drawbacks. I believe myself to be a very ordinary person. If there is any exceptional power in me, it proceeds from my aspiration to serve truth and non-violence with single-minded devotion. It is incorrect to state, "If one like me can commit so grave an offence against God as to deserve such a serious illness, ordinary people simply cannot hope to be able to save themselves from offences against Him." Since I am myself an ordinary man, none need lose heart. The fever within is the only serious illness. An appendix means a superfluous part. Its inflammation is appendicitis. The inflammation of this superfluous part is not, in my view, a serious illness. To talk evil or to do evil is, I believe, the only serious illness. God's laws are so subtle and their observance so difficult that in saving ourselves from even unwitting transgressions lies the health and well-being of the self. If, in thus trying to save oneself, one falls a prey to bodily illness, one need not lament over it.

Now I shall explain a particular kind of "offence against God" which I know of. First we shall take up the subject of food. I know very well the need for moderation in eating. I have tried my very best to follow the rule. A person who spends much of his time thinking, one who wants to make fresh discoveries by delving into the depths of his heart, should be a frugal eater. He should not be afraid of growing thin. I have never been a frugal eater in this sense, and am not that even today. I have not learnt to be unconcerned about leanness of the body. I wish to maintain my constitution and also reflect and ponder. I am torn by this conflict. My experiments go on, but so far I have not discovered the measure of how little I should eat. This cannot be done by magic. Only changes brought about in a natural way can be kept up. Even for a frugal eater it is necessary to strive to be indifferent to pleasure in food. I have been trying hard to keep the vow of restraining the palate, but I am still very far from the goal. I have taken only goat's milk for sustenance, but I have caught myself enjoying even that. As long as there is this pleasure in food, so long will there be danger of illness. Failure in conquering the palate is the "offence against God".

But, then, have I succeeded in subduing unworthy feelings and desires? Anyone who has read my jail experiences will know that

even in jail conflicts were my lot. I have certainly not described all my experiences. I have not even referred to struggles with our people. Those who wage these struggles from the religious point of view alone know what suffering they involve. If we can fight these battles without attachment and aversion, we shall never suffer bodily illness. But I get angry. The good pleases me and the bad hurts. What difference does it make if I do not show this? I alone know what effort is needed for these struggles. The effort needed to make some great discovery in electricity is one-hundredth part of what is needed to conquer attachment and aversion. And the joy which fills one on winning that victory is much greater than Newton's joy when he discovered the principle of the earth's gravitational force. There were many occasions in jail when I was angry. It was very difficult at such times to control the mind. Strenuous effort is needed to work against the environment of a jail. The passions of anger, etc., excited on those occasions cannot but have their effect on the body. In the end, I could not help mentioning the disturbance through dreams. As long as one has not conquered disturbing thoughts, the danger of bodily illness will remain.

The fact is that in the study of psychology we have so far scratched only the surface. *Vaids*, *hakims* and doctors have merely busied themselves with the body, and have not analysed the mind at all; being themselves men troubled by desires, they have spent their time finding out remedies merely by observing the changes in the body.

They have not examined with care the terrible effects of mental disorders on the body. It is yet to be discovered how, without the use of external remedies, diseases can be prevented through control of the senses. It would be more correct to say that such discoveries had been made but were forgotten later. If the modern *vaids* and *hakims* kept in mind the *atman* while examining physical ailments, they would, I am sure, revive the method of treating the mind rather than apply external remedies. Instead of polluting the body by injecting all sorts of serums, which are in fact forms of infection, they would be ready to explain natural laws—God's laws—for preserving health. I wrote my book[1] on health with some such idea in mind. I wished to make a great many experiments in this direction, and I fell ill while making them. As a result of this, I lost self-confidence; the responsibility for conduct-

[1] Chapters of this book in Gujarati first appeared serially in *Indian Opinion*, in 1913; *vide* Vols. XI & XII, "General Knowledge about Health".

ing satyagraha campaigns became another obstacle in my way. If I become free from it, I will resume my experiments.

Meanwhile, I should like the reader to know that I am convinced that I myself was the chief cause of every illness from which I have suffered. Even now, if only I can free my thoughts from the taint of desire, my body would become healthy in this very life of mine, would become strong as steel though thin and would be immune against any infection, etc.

The lesson which the reader should draw from this article is that one can become healthy by conquering troublesome desires of the mind. If, in the attempt, he falls ill, he should not lose heart but should persevere in his efforts. He should not despair if he does not succeed in his aim, but should go on trying, keeping up his faith. Pamper his body as he may, it is bound to perish. He does not at all know when it will perish, and he should not have excessive love for a thing more delicate than a glass bangle. Instead of deceiving himself, he should know that the cause of most of the diseases from which he suffers is violation of the simple laws of God.

We have wrongly come to believe that those rules are very difficult to observe. In our indolence we assume that, since everyone says they are, they must be so. If we strive with energy enough, we shall discover that it is natural for man not to submit to improper desires, but to conquer them.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-6-1924

170. MY NOTES

KHADI *v.* CALICO

A correspondent from Dharwar district writes:[1]

I receive such letters often. The lesson to be drawn from them is that, though khadi may not be durable, and though it may be more expensive yard for yard than calico and wear out too soon if the yarn is not strong, still one should not forget that the use of khadi naturally brings with it simplicity in other matters and is in its own way far from expensive. No one would want to use four or five garments of khadi at a time, but one would not be satisfied with

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that he had found khadi much cheaper than foreign cloth and, since he started wearing it, he had ceased to feel it below his dignity to do simple jobs.

wearing only a muslin shirt. This is not to say that the use of khadi will have the same effect on everyone which it has had on this gentleman, or that there is something in khadi itself which produces this effect. It is the result of the associations which go with khadi and the sentiments which lie behind it. Anyone can see, with a little observation, that the use of khadi has brought about great changes in the lives of hundreds of men.

COMMUNITY DINNERS FOLLOWING DEATH

The same correspondent describes a great difficulty which he is facing. His caste-fellows have been pressing him to give a community dinner on the death of his mother. He himself does not believe in this practice. He believes, rather, that such dinners do us harm. But then, his caste-fellows will feel hurt if he does not observe the practice and give the dinner. The problem is what one should do in this dilemma. If age-old evils are to be banished from society, one who takes the lead always has to face difficulties like this. Courtesy and firmness—display of these two qualities helps at such times. One should face the opposition to one's own decision with civility and firmness. We should not do something wrong even to please our caste-fellows. Giving community dinners on death cannot possibly earn religious merit. There seems to be a common practice of giving gifts following a death though not as charity, at least in order that no one may consider us miserly or indifferent to the good opinion of the community. If we spend on the education of the boys and girls in our community the amount which is likely to be required for a community dinner after death, or something more, the purpose would be fully served. If we learn to save all the money, or a large part of it, which we spend out of a false sense of pride or fear on dinners following death and on other customs, we would not be faced, as we always are, with shortage of funds. But God knows what spell this custom has cast and even men of wisdom forget their wisdom and, acting like ignorant people, raise a loan and give the customary dinner. But, in this age of simplicity of khadi, we can all spare ourselves such expenditure.

WORTHY OF IMITATION

There had been bitterness between Hindus and Muslims in Karad[1]. Some Muslims had broken Hindu idols. Some Muslims were, therefore, arrested and were being prosecuted in a court of law. Now I have received a telegram from the Secretary of the

[1] A town in Maharashtra

All-India Congress Committee saying that, at a public meeting of Hindus and Muslims, the Muslims had apologized, expressed their regret and undertaken to find out the idol-breakers. Moreover, they even agreed to give a guarantee against the breaking of idols hereafter. Both Hindus and Muslims would meet to draw up a code of conduct for the future. The Muslims would pay compensation for the loss caused by idol-breaking.

Consequent upon this settlement, they applied to the Collector to have the case withdrawn and, after satisfying himself about the above settlement, the Collector permitted the withdrawal. The settlement appears to be a genuine thing. The practice of appointing *panchas* was initiated in Delhi, and now it has been admirably followed in Karad. Let us hope that, wherever there is bitterness between Hindus and Muslims, both will meet together and arrive at an understanding; seeing that mutual interest lies therein, they should live amicably and help one another. If both the communities come to an agreement and mix with open minds, no misunderstanding will ever arise again. I am told that an incident like the one in Karad has taken place in Burhanpur[1]. Won't the local Hindus and Muslims themselves arrive at an understanding?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-6-1924

171. A WELCOME CORRECTION

A correspondent writes to tell me that in the article entitled "Lack or Excess of Love"[2] my explanation of the use of "thou" is very good. But there is one sentence in it which suggests the "you" relationship. He thinks that if, instead of writing "Rama is mine and I am his slave", I had written "Rama is mine and I am Rama's", my explanation about "thou" would have sounded more beautiful. This view appears to be quite true. "His slave" shows distance. "I am Rama's" suggests perfect union. But how will the expression occur to one when the feeling is not there in one's heart? It seems slavery is still dear to me. Perhaps even now I feel happy being at a distance, and so regard myself as a slave. I realize every moment that it is not easy to become a Mother Avvai. When we use language simply to express our thoughts, we naturally say

[1] A town in Maharashtra

[2] *Vide* pp. 196-8.

what is in our mind. Not having seen God face to face, how was I to find the language of such experience? But I shall certainly try. And so, too, should the reader.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-6-1924

172. RESOLUTIONS AT A.I.C.C. MEETING[1]

AHMEDABAD,
June 29, 1924

Mr. Gandhi then spoke. He called upon the Swarajists to work the charkha programme. He further expressed the hope that they would do so in a good spirit. Mr. Gandhi then proceeded to move his second resolution:

RESOLUTION 2: Inasmuch as it has been brought to the notice of the All-India Congress Committee that instructions issued from time to time by officers and organizations duly authorized thereto have sometimes not been carried out properly, it is resolved that the executive committees of the Provincial Congress Committees shall have power to take such disciplinary action, including dismissal, as deemed advisable and, in cases where the default is by provincial authorities, the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee shall have the power to take such disciplinary action, including dismissal, as may be deemed advisable by the respective Committees of the Provincial Committees.

In moving the resolution, Mr. Gandhi referred to the visit paid him last night by Pandit Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was asked by them why it was that he advised the committee to expunge the penalty clause from the first resolution passed yesterday. He was also asked as to the trend of his mind at that time. Mr. Gandhi told them what he told the meeting yesterday: there was no real majority in favour of that clause. It was therefore the dignified course for the All-India Congress Committee to expunge the clause. After detailing the objections to the clause providing penalty made by Mr. Das, Mr. Gandhi said that Mr. Das had agreed to the compromise placed before them and had further agreed to work the constructive programme to the best of his ability and join the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. While drafting it, Mr. Gandhi did

[1] After his discussions with Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and Abul Kalam Azad at the Ashram the previous night, Gandhiji moved the second resolution as revised by him. For the draft of this and other resolutions, *vide* "The Acid Test", 19-6-1924.

not consult anybody. He had tried to satisfy the Swarajists to the best of his ability. He had thus placed his compromise before the meeting. He would ask them to dismiss him for a moment from their minds in disposing of the resolution. Mr. Gandhi said:

If you want to reject the resolution, reject it, but, if you want to pass it, shoulder the responsibilities.[1]

RESOLUTION 3: The A.I.C.C. draws the attention of the Congress voters to the fact that the five boycotts, namely of all mill-spun cloth, Government law-courts, educational institutions, titles and legislative bodies, except in so far as they may have been affected by the Cocanada resolution, are still part of the Congress programme and therefore considers it desirable that those Congress voters who believe in the Congress programme do not elect to the various Congress organizations those who do not believe in carrying out in their own person the said five boycotts except where affected by the said Cocanada resolution and the A.I.C.C. therefore requests such persons, who are now members of Congress elective organizations, to resign their places.[2]

Mr. Gandhi then made a brief reply.[3] He discouraged strongly the idea of confusing issues with loyalty to him. What would they do if he died tomorrow? What did they mean doing if he had a sudden accident? Mr. Gandhi deprecated the tendency to centralize everything round him. He called on the Committee to pass his resolution if they were convinced it was the right course to follow or to reject it and adopt Mr. Varadachariar's amendment if they thought it was good.

The amendments were defeated and original resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority.[4]

[1] Vallabhbhai Patel seconded the resolution which was carried unanimously without any discussion.

[2] Gandhiji did not make any speech on the motion, which was seconded by Vallabhbhai Patel. The resolution, as originally proposed before and accepted by the Working Committee, ran as follows : "In the opinion of the All-India Congress Committee, it is desirable that Congress electors do not elect to the various Congress organizations practising lawyers, those who deal in or wear mill-spun cloth, parents and guardians sending their minor children to educational institutions under Government control, holders of Government titles and members of Legislative bodies and the A.I.C.C. therefore requests such persons who are now members of the various Congress elective organizations to resign their places."

[3] In regard to certain amendments which were moved

[4] The Committee then adjourned till 9 p.m., when it was to discuss the resolution on Gopinath Saha.

Mr. Gandhi then moved the following resolution:[1]

Mr. Gandhi refused to make any reply[2] on the ground that, if the country did not know its mind, at this stage of the struggle, there was no meaning in his saying anything.

The Hindu, 30-6-1924

173. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING[3]

June 30, 1924

What I saw after the Gopinath Saha resolution caused me amusement as well as pain. I wondered what I could say to you. I shall say something later through the columns of *Young India*. Why was I pained so much? Only because we all who had taken a pledge to win swaraj had gathered there; we had agreed to employ only non-violent non-co-operation; and yet we spoke exclusively about violence. How can we talk about violence at all in the All-India Congress Committee? If we share the ideal and the resolve of the Congress, we would utter not a word of violence. I won by eight votes on the last resolution[4]. I have not known a thing like victory in this world. . . .[5] Dr. Paranjpye has not said a new thing; on the contrary, he has presented my principle in a diluted form. What I had said was: "Truthful means should be employed even against scoundrels." I had also spoken of kissing the feet of the enemy who violates the modesty of your sister, who inflicts a wound on you. I would not abandon this faith even if I were offered the kingdom of the world. But I do admit that there is also the way of violence. That is precisely why I had said in Delhi that we must speak out our true belief. But today we have put up a pretence. If you want to draw the sword, do so; and if you wield it truthfully, I shall repair to the Himalayas and send you my compliments from there. But I am tired of make-believe. Why should I have to talk about the Gopinath resolution? About other resolutions I would certainly speak, argue and explain. But if I have to make a speech today

[1] Not reproduced here. For the text of the fourth resolution, which was passed without any change, *vide* "The Acid Test", 19-6-1924.

[2] In regard to an amendment which was proposed

[3] After the formal session was over, the A.I.C.C. met informally.

[4] Gandhiji's Resolution No. 4, which condemned the murder of Ernest Day by Gopinath Saha

[5] As in the source

about a thing which is the mainstay of the Congress, then we must give up our fight.

And after doing an act of violence[1], we started fooling about. Gangadharrao[2] asked me what he should do. I replied that he should resign. I for one would ask him to burn all his possessions. Asaf Ali came and asked the same question. He asked, "What wrong have the lawyers done?" I drafted my resolution[3] under those circumstances. I even saw how you treated that draft resolution. I liked your opposing me, because my resolution would have reflected discredit on me—it would have been like taking a cup of poison. But I drank it, because I could realize the condition of the people, whom I have made it my business to study for the last thirty years. I assessed the capacity of all of us and I felt that I needs must draft such a resolution. But a point of law was raised against me. Then I was taken aback. I asked myself: "O poor creature! Do you serve God or Satan? Why do you trouble yourself in this way?"[4]

I for one wish to deal only with straightforward men. All of you are not that. What is the All-India Congress Committee? It will be what you would make of it. If you wish to be true to yourself, leave the Congress and work in the villages. You can take a donkey's work from me, but that in a straightforward way, not in a cunning way. True, you can hoodwink me, but when I see that you are betraying me, I shall seek refuge in God and will stand aloof from you.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 6-7-1924

[1] A reference presumably to the speeches of some A.I.C.C. members on Gandhiji's Resolution No. 4. Their "violence" consisted in their defence of Gopinath Saha's action.

[2] Gangadharrao Balkrishna Deshpande; journalist and Congress leader of Karnatak

[3] Gandhiji's Resolution No. 5, which was not accepted by the A.I.C.C.; the resolution was meant to protect litigants from the operation of Gandhiji's Resolution No. 3 passed by the A.I.C.C., suggesting resignation of members who did not believe in the principle of the five boycotts, including that of law-courts, and did not carry them out themselves.

[4] At this point Gandhiji paused a little as tears began to flow from his eyes. He soon regained his composure and continued his speech.

174. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA[1]

AHMEDABAD,
July 1, 1924

It is most difficult to give my impressions now, not because there is none to give, but because there are too many. Just as a man who eats too much does no good to himself except to impair his digestion, so these impressions, not being digested and, therefore, not arranged in the brain, do not lend themselves to a readable description. For the time being, therefore, I must invite the curious to be satisfied with the honest impressions of spectators or with the imaginary pictures of reporters. It is highly probable that, on the principle that spectators see more of the play than the actors, the honest impressions of the former, supplemented by the enterprising imagination of reporters will give the public an idea of the very important proceedings of the Committee.

One definite impression, however, I can give. Though on all of the four resolutions that I had the honour of moving I had a majority in their favour, I must own that, according to my conception, I was defeated. The proceedings have been an eye-opener to me and I am now occupied in a diligent search from within. As yet, I am without an answer.

After having seen the newspaper reports yesterday and a private telegram describing them, I am not sure that I was wise in discouraging the Kerala members from pressing for a resolution of the All-India Congress Committee on the Vykom Satyagraha. My general opinion is that all such local struggles should depend for success on their own inherent strength and not upon support borrowed from the central body. But the new development probably justifies an emphatic declaration by the A.I.C.C. I shall certainly recommend some resolution for the Working Committee for adoption. If the reports are to be relied upon, the Travancore State authorities have abandoned the innocent satyagrahis to the *goondas* said to have been employed by the orthodox opponents of the reform for which the satyagrahis have been fighting. Travancore is said to be one of the most enlightened States of India and I hope that, for its very fame, if not for the sake of

[1] Gandhiji was asked to give his impressions of the A.I.C.C. session which had just concluded.

humanity, the reports are without foundation. It is a serious thing if satyagrahis are cruelly beaten by the *goondas*. Limes are thrown into their eyes and their khaddar shirts torn from them and burnt. Why the authorities can possibly take away inoffensive charkhas from the volunteers passes my understanding. I hope the Travancore Durbar will immediately set the matter right and revert to its original admirable policy of merely preserving the peace between the reformers and the orthodox section.

I hope, too, that the satyagrahis will remain calm, unperturbed and withal particularly non-violent. It is a time of great trial for them. If they can brave all the sufferings that may be heaped upon them with dignity and without retaliation, success is assured. Their silent suffering will melt the hearts of even the *goondas* and the orthodox opposition will realize that they have nothing but disgrace in return for their inhumanity.

The Hindu, 2-7-1924

175. MESSAGE TO VYKOM SATYAGRAHIS

SABARMATI,
July 2, 1924

The unexpected development in Vykom puts a severe strain on the satyagrahis. But, two things are needful for success—unlimited patience and unconquerable courage. Patience means non-violence. Let orthodoxy do its worst. Reformers will take the severest blows without retaliation. Courage means ability to suffer. There must be satyagrahis enough ready to suffer the most refined tortures. It is my experience that those who fight in a just cause and in the name of God receive just enough capacity for suffering.

M. K. GANDHI

The Hindu, 2-7-1924

176. DEFEATED AND HUMBLED

Reporters are rarely able to interest me, but one of them did succeed the other day in interesting me in him. I therefore gave him, towards the end of the interview more than he had expected. He asked me what I would do if the house was evenly divided. I told him in effect that God would send something to prevent such a catastrophe. I had no idea that my innocent and half-humorous remark was prophetic.

The proceedings of the A.I.C.C. reminded me of those at Delhi just before I was imprisoned. The disillusionment of Delhi awaited me at Ahmedabad.

I had a bare majority always for the four resolutions.[1] But it must be regarded by me as a minority. The house was fairly evenly divided. The Gopinath Saha resolution clinched the issue. The speeches, the result and the scenes I witnessed after, was a perfect eye-opener. I undoubtedly regard the voting as a triumph for Mr. Das although he was apparently defeated by eight votes. That he could find 70 supporters out of 148 who voted had a deep significance for me. It lighted the darkness though very dimly as yet.

Up to the point of the declaration of the poll, I was enjoying the whole thing as a huge joke, though I knew all the while that it was as serious as it was huge. I now see that my enjoyment was superficial. It concealed the laceration that was going on within.

After the declaration, the chief actors retired from the scene. And the house abandoned itself to levity. Most important resolutions were passed with the greatest unconcern. There were flashes of humour sandwiched in between these resolutions. Everybody rose on points of order and information. The ordeal was enough to try the patience of any chairman. Maulana Mahomed Ali came through it all unscathed. He kept his temper fairly. He rightly refused to recognize 'points of information'. I must confess that the suitors for fame most cheerfully obeyed his summary rulings. Let not the reader conclude that there was, at any stage of the proceedings, the slightest insubordination. I have not known many meetings where there was so little acrimony or personalities in the debate as in this, even though feelings ran high and the differences were sharp and serious. I have known meetings where,

[1] *Vide* "The Acid Test", 19-6-1924.

under similar circumstances, the chairmen have found it most difficult to keep order. The president of the A.I.C.C. commanded willing obedience.

All the same, dignity vanished after the Gopinath resolution. It was before this House that I had to put my last resolution. As the proceedings went on, I must have become more and more serious. Often I felt like running away from the oppressive scene. I dreaded having to move a resolution in my charge. I would have asked for postponement of the resolution but for the promise I had made the meeting that I would suggest a remedy, or failing that, move a resolution for protecting litigants from the operation of the third resolution which requests resignation from members who do not believe in the principle of the five boycotts, including that of law-courts, and do not carry them out in their own persons. Protection was intended for those who might be *driven* to the courts either as plaintiffs or defendants. The resolution that was adopted by the Working Committee and previously circulated among the members did protect them. It was substituted by the one actually passed by the A.I.C.C. As the reader knows, it exempts from its operation those who might be covered by the Cocanada resolution. In drafting that amendment I had not protected litigants. I had wished to do so by a separate resolution. I had announced the fact at the time of introducing the resolution. And it was this promised resolution that opened for me a way out of 'darkness invisible'. I moved it with the preface that it was in redemption of the morning promise. I mentioned, too, Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande was an insttance in point. I do not believe in exemptions and as-far-as-possibles. But I know that some of the strongest non-co-operators have found it difficult to avoid law-courts. Unscrupulous debtors have refused payment to non-co-operators because of their knowledge that the latter could not sue them. Similarly, I know men who have brought suits against non-co-operators because they would not defend themselves. The curious will be agreeably surprised to discover, if they searched among the rank and file, the numerous cases in which non-co-operators have preferred to suffer losses to defending themselves or suing. Nevertheless, it is perfectly true that representatives have not always been able to keep to the prohibition. The practice, therefore, has been to wink at filing suits and more often at defending them. The Committee has from time to time also passed rules legalizing the practice to a certain extent. I thought that now when the A.I.C.C. was adopting a rigid attitude regarding the observance of the boycotts,

the position of litigants should be clearly defined. Nothing would please me better than for the Congress to have only those representatives on its executive who would carry out all the boycotts to the full. But the exact fulfilment at the present stage of the boycott of law-courts on the part of many is almost an impossibility. Voluntary acceptance of poverty is essential for the purpose. It must take some time before we can hope to man the Congress organizations with such men and women, and run them efficiently. Recognizing the hard fact, I was prepared to incur the odium of having to move the said resolution of exemption. Hardly had I finished reading it, up sprang the brave Harisarvottama Rao to his feet and, in a vigorous and cogent speech, opposed it. He said it was his painful duty to oppose me. I told him the pain was mine in that I had to move a resolution I could not defend. His must be the pleasure of opposing an indefensible resolution and of keeping the Congress organization pure at any cost. I liked this opposition and was looking forward to the voting. But the opposer was followed by Swami Govindanand who raised the technical objection that no resolution designed to affect one previously passed could be moved at the same session of the Committee. The chairman properly rejected the objection, if only because the previous day the very first resolution was amended after it was passed by a majority. But the last straw was unwittingly supplied by Dr. Choithram. I have known him to be a responsible man. A long period of unbroken service lies to his credit. He has embraced poverty for the sake of his country. I was not prepared for a constitutional objection from him in a matter in which the Committee had on previous occasions softened the effect of the boycott resolution. But he thoughtlessly asked whether my resolution was not in breach of the Congress resolution on boycotts. Maulana Mahomed Ali asked me whether the objection was not just. I said of course it was. He therefore felt bound to hold my resolution unconstitutional. Then I sank within me. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, wrong about anybody's speech or behaviour. All were brief in their remarks. They were equally courteous. And, what is more, they were seemingly in the right. And yet it was all hopelessly unreal. The objections were like reading a sermon on the virtue of self-restraint to a hungry man reduced to a skeleton. Each of the actors acted involuntarily, unconsciously. I felt that God was speaking to me through them and seemed to say, 'Thou fool, knowest not thou that thou art impossible? Thy time is up.' Gangadharrao asked me whether he should not resign. I agreed with him that he should do so at once. And he

promptly tendered his resignation. The President read it to the meeting. It was accepted almost unanimously. Gangadharrao was the gainer.

Shaukat Ali was sitting right opposite at a distance of perhaps six yards. His presence restrained me from fleeing. I kept asking myself, 'Could right ever come out of wrong? Was I not co-operating with evil?' Shaukat Ali seemed to say to me through his big eyes, 'There is nothing wrong, for all will be right.' I was struggling to free myself from the enchantment. I could not.

The President asked, 'Shall I now dissolve the meeting?' I said, 'Certainly.' But Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was evidently watching whatever changes my face was undergoing, was all eyes. He quickly came up and said, 'We cannot disperse without the message you have promised.' I replied, 'Maulana Saheb, it is true I wanted to say something about the future plans. But what I have been witnessing for the last hour, after the Gopinath resolution, has grieved me. I do not know where I stand now and what I should do.' 'Then,' he said, 'say even if it is only that.' I complied and in a short speech in Hindustani laid bare my heart and let them see the blood oozing out of it. It takes much to make me weep. I try to suppress tears even when there is occasion for them. But, in spite of all my efforts to be brave, I broke down utterly. The audience was visibly affected. I took them through the various stages I had passed and told them that it was Shaukat Ali who stood in the way of my flight. For I regarded him as trustee for Hindu honour, as I was proud enough to regard myself as such for Mussalman honour. And then I told them that I was unable to say how I would shape my future course. I would consult him and other workers who were closely associated with me. It was the saddest speech I had ever made. I finished and turned round to look for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He had stolen away from me and was standing at the farthest end opposite to me. I told him I would now like to go. He said, 'Not yet, for a while. For we must speak too.' And he invited the audience to speak. Those who spoke did so with a sob. The sight of the hoary-headed Sikh friend who was choked as he was speaking touched me deep. Of course Shaukat Ali spoke and others. All begged pardon and assured me of their unwavering support. Mahomed Ali broke down twice. I tried to soothe him.

I had nothing to forgive for none had done any wrong to me. On the contrary, they had all been personally kind to me. I was sad because we were weighed in the scales of our own making—

the Congress creed—and found wanting; we were such poor representatives of the nation! I seemed to be hopelessly out of place. My grief consisted in the doubt about my own ability to lead those who would not follow.

I saw that I was utterly defeated and humbled. But defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me. My faith in my creed stands immovable. I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom.

M. K. GANDHI

The foregoing was written on Monday the 30th June. I wrote it, but I was not satisfied nor am I satisfied now with the performance. On reading it I feel I have not done justice to the meeting or myself. Great as the informal meeting was, the one that preceded it, and that stung me to the quick, was not less great. I do not know that I have made it clear that no speaker had any malice in him. What preyed upon my mind was the fact of unconscious irresponsibility and disregard of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence.

The informal meeting was a heart-searcher. It purified the atmosphere. The whole of Tuesday I passed in discussing with co-workers my position. My innermost wish was and still is to retire from the Congress and confine my activity merely to Hindu-Muslim unity, khaddar and untouchability. They would not listen. I had no right, they said, to retire at a critical period in the history of the nation. My withdrawal would not smooth matters. It would cause depression and remove from Congress meetings an active restraining influence. I must actively work the programme of which I was the author, so long as the majority favoured it. The programme had a far greater majority than the voting at the A.I.C.C. would indicate. I must travel in the country and see things for myself. My second proposal was for all who fully accepted the Congress creed to retire in favour of the Swarajists. As the argument against it developed, I rejected it myself as thoughtless. It was the last thing the Swarajists wanted. I felt that it would be doing violence to them to expect them to do the impossible. I know that they would not entertain even the first proposal. I offered it to them at Juhu and renewed it in Ahmedabad. I have therefore reluctantly decided to drink the bitter cup and continue to be in the Congress organization and shoulder the responsibility for working it until the Congress puts me in an actual numerical minority.

I may not choose short cuts. I must plod. I must pocket my pride and wait till I am driven out.

I must seemingly become a party-man and show that I can still work as a no-party man. I must strive for a majority at the next Congress and endeavour, so far as it is possible, to act impartially. It is not beyond the capacity of a satyagrahi.

The conditions are incredibly simple. The striving to be in a majority consists in solid work.

1. Over and above the spinning for half an hour, every spare minute should be given to it.

2. Extra spinning can be dispensed with in order to do khaddar propaganda.

3. We may swell the electoral roll by getting as many Congress members as possible.

4. There should be no manipulation of papers.

5. There should be no manœuvring for securing votes.

6. There should be no criticism of the opposite party, as distinguished from policy.

7. There should be no undue pressure exercised on the voters.

Both the parties are said to have resorted in the past to unscrupulous practices in the matter of election of delegates and members of the subordinate organizations. The best way of avoiding corruption is to be indifferent to the result after having adopted all honest measures for influencing voters.

The No-change programme must be what it means. The proceedings of the Committee have but confirmed the view that the two methods cannot be worked in the same organization. The Swarajist method cultivates British opinion and looks to the British Parliament for swaraj. The No-change method looks to the people for it. The two methods represent two opposite mentalities. This is not to say that one is wrong if the other is right. Each may be right in its own place. But for one organization to work both is to weaken both and therefore to damage the national cause. Whilst one school claims to give political education through the Councils, the other claims to give it exclusively by working among the people and evoking its organizing and administrative capacity. One teaches to look up to a Government for popular progress, the other tries to show that even the most ideal government plays among a self-governing people the least important part in national growth. One teaches the people that the construc-

tive programme alone cannot achieve swaraj, the other teaches the people that it and it alone can achieve it.

Unfortunately, I was unable to convince the Swarajists of this obvious truth. And I saw constitutional difficulty in the way of securing a homogeneous organization. We must now, therefore, do the next best thing. We must silently work up the constructive programme without regard to what will happen in December, in the full belief that whether the Congress rejects or accepts the programme, for us there is no other. I would ask those newspapers that call themselves No-change papers not to criticize the Swarajists in any shape or form. I am convinced that newspapers play a very small part in shaping the policy or programme of the masses. They do not know newspapers. The No-changers have to reach and represent those who have had no political education whatsoever.

Young India, 3-7-1924

177. *BOMBAY, REMEMBER SAROJINI*

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu returns to Bombay on the 12th instant. I have no doubt that Bombay will give her a rousing reception. The Congress could not have sent a better messenger to East Africa and South Africa to plead the cause of her sons and daughters in those distant lands. Sarojini has been a real mother to those sons and daughters. She has not spared herself in their service. I present Bombay with the latest letter received from her to remind it of its duty when India's nightingale returns to delight the Indian ear with her sweet music. Here is the letter:

> At long last I have, I confess with great sadness, disentangled the tendrils of my heart from all the clinging hands in your South Africa that is so full of your children.
>
> After three months of ceaseless work and travelling when I got aboard the *Karagola*, I felt I could sleep and sleep and sleep—every fibre of my body was charged with weariness and for the first few days I lay in my chair like a lump of indolence, but now inspite of my fever (a faithful companion), I am quite ready to start another month's work in East Africa. Tomorrow I land at Dar-es-salaam and, after finishing my tour in Tanganyika, I go on to Kenya and sail from there on 2nd July and reach Bombay on the 12th. I know there will be a struggle to keep me longer in Kenya, but I shall be obdurate because of a selfish reason. My small daughter is returning home for the long vacation from Oxford. I

have not seen her for three years. Have you not accused me of being a good mother?

You would laugh if you saw my luggage. I have arrived at a stage in my life and mind when I am dismayed by too many possessions; but Africa has added to them with both hands. I am devising means whereby to dispossess myself of most of them to advantage. Fortunately I have a large family clan! Seven silver jewel boxes and not enough jewels to put into one! Seven silver purses and not enough money to fill one! Fine gorgeous sets of hair-brush and not enough hair left to brush, and O! such beautiful foreign silks which I cannot wear! Caskets of gold, silver, ivory, tortoise-shell with scrolls full of praises of some imaginary lady whom I don't recognize, and so on and so forth, — about 175 presents and presentations and I a wandering singer! How you would laugh at the joyous irony of life. The one thing I was really in need of I could not get in the whole of the African continent — a pair of Indian shoes.

This is quite a frivolous letter, but it is a wholesome reaction, though temporary, from the many South African politicians and the many addresses of high praise. I am taking refuge in light magazines and playing with blue-eyed babies on board.

My fellow-travellers are friendly. It is my good fortune that I always find friendliness everywhere, even while some of the more rabid anti-Asiatics were bitterly attacking me politically, they were most friendly personally! Some people ask such funny questions like a young American in a train who quite seriously asked me in the course of conversation if, after all, Gandhi was not verily a patriot at heart. I nearly collapsed on my seat.

Young India, 3-7-1924

178. THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

All the resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee will be found printed at another page. The first resolution is bereft of the penalty clause. It was my first defeat in a series. Majorities cannot deceive me. It was impossible for me to be satisfied with a bare majority when I knew that, if the Swarajist withdrawals were to be taken into account, the defeat was a certainty. I therefore urged the meeting to take into account the withdrawals and remove the penalty clause from the resolution.

The second resolution is not the same as the original draft, but in substance it is the same. The principle of disciplinary action is retained.

The third resolution constitutes real failure. I still feel that the elective organizations of the Congress are executive and that, therefore, they should contain only those who heartily support the Congress Programme for the time being and who are prepared not to obstruct or tone it down, but to carry it out in its entirety. But it was not possible to get over the constitutional difficulty. Any restriction upon the Cocanada programme must be considered a breach of the Congress constitution. Putting the interpretation that I do even now, the original resolution was not a breach. But it was pointed out to me that I have no right to put my own interpretation upon it and that the Swarajists had the right to contend that those who entered the Councils were not debarred from being on the executives. They said that, as a matter of fact, there were Swarajists on the Working Committee already. The argument had great weight with me and, in view of the knowledge that the original resolution disqualifying the Swarajists from being on the executives could only be passed by a narrow majority, was decisive in reconciling me to the resolution as finally adopted. It does not please me. But it was the only possible course left save that of dropping the whole proposition. That was required for the sake of keeping before the country the idea of having a homogeneous organization and of insisting on purity of political conduct. Representatives must be expected to conform to the standards they lay down for others. It must be pointed out in a variety of ways that the Congress is no longer a begging association, but that it is primarily a self-purification association designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength. Public opinion must, therefore, be created in favour of the things needed for the national life. The best way of creating it is to frame propositions and enlisting support therefor. Whilst, therefore, I have reconciled myself to the possibility of temporary heterogeneity, I would strongly plead with both the parties not to obstruct each other's path.

The fourth resolution however completed my defeat. It is true that the Gopinath resolution was carried by a bare majority. A clear minority would have pleased me more than a narrow majority. I do not forget the fact that many who voted for Mr. Das's amendment did so because of the rumour of impending arrests. Many naturally felt it a point of honour to protect a valued chief and comrade who had rendered signal services to the country and who had performed great self-sacrifice. Sentiment often outweighs moral considerations and I have no doubt that the Bengal Government will make a serious blunder if they arrest Mr. Das and his supporters. It is too late in the day to punish opinions. If there

was no moral consideration against supporting Mr. Das's amendment, I would have had no hesitation whatsoever in myself tendering my support. But I could not, no Congressman could. Mr. Das sees no difference between my resolution and his. I can only call it self-deception. Those who spoke in support of his proposition did not mince matters. They had room for political murder in their philosophy and, after all, is it not the common philosophy? The majority of the so-called civilized peoples believe in and act upon it on due occasions. They hold that for a disorganized and oppressed people political assassination is the only remedy. That it is a false philosophy, that it has failed to make the world better to live in, is only too true. I merely state that, if Mr. Das and his supporters have erred, they have the bulk of civilized opinion on their side. The foreign masters of India have no better record to show. If the Congress was a political organization with no limitation as to means, it would be impossible to object to Mr. Das's amendment on merits. It would then be reduced to a question of expedience.

But that there were seventy Congress representatives to support the resolution was a staggering revelation. They have proved untrue to their creed. In my opinion the amendment was in breach of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence. But I purposely refrained from raising such an objection. If the members wanted the resolution, it was well for them to have it. It is always best in my opinion to let constitutional questions be decided as a rule by members.

The other resolutions do not require any discussion.

The resolution extolling the Sikh sacrifice and bravery was in continuation of the traditional policy of the Congress.

The opium resolution became necessary for two reasons. Miss La Motte, who has been doing most valuable work in trying to reduce the world's growth of opium to its bare medical necessity, has pointed out in tragic terms the immoral opium policy of the Government of India. Mr. Andrews has shown how the Government of India made itself responsible for changing at the Opium Convention the word "medical" to "legitimate" in describing people's requirements. It, therefore, became necessary, in view of the approaching convention at Geneva for the A.I.C.C., to say what the nation thinks of the Government of India policy. It had become equally necessary to investigate the condition of the Assamese under the opium habit. A fine body of men and women are undergoing a process of decay under the cursed opium habit. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee is ready to inquire into

the matter. The A.I.C.C. has, therefore, thought it desirable to appoint Mr. Andrews to conduct the inquiry in co-operation with the Provincial Committee.

The seventh resolution authorizes the Working Committee to appoint, if necessary, a deputation to inquire into the condition of Indian labourers of the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon. We know nothing of the condition of the labourers who emigrate to Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula except from the stray reports that appear in the Press. It is our duty to study their condition and do whatever we can to ameliorate it.

Young India, 3-7-1924

179. NOTES

Quick Response

Immediately on the resolution requesting members who did not carry out the boycotts in their own persons to resign being carried at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Mr. Kalidas Jhaveri, who is a practising lawyer, handed in his resignation as member of various committees. He was elected with the full knowledge of the voters that he had resumed practice. I congratulate Mr. Kalidas Jhaveri on the quick response to the Committee's invitation. He is a good worker. Let us hope that his services will not be lost to the Congress because he had resigned office. Everyone who either may not see eye to eye with the Congress in all its programme, or because of weakness or circumstances over which he may have no control and, therefore, cannot have a place in the executive organization, can still work as effectively as if he was in the executive. There is, for instance, nothing to prevent Mr. Jhaveri from enlisting members, spinning, carrying on khaddar propaganda, collecting subscriptions, etc. Indeed, a sincere worker prefers work to responsibility of office and, by not being on the executive, escapes the terrible wranglings that take place therein.

When the A.I.C.C. rejected the resolution exempting litigants, Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande immediately tendered his resignation which was accepted as soon as tendered. Mr. Deshpande happened to be the General Secretary of the Congress. He is also the chairman of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee. It will be interesting to learn how the difficulty in Karnatak is to be overcome, seeing that Mr. Deshpande is the moving spirit. He is organizing the Congress work.

Mr. Gangadharrao's case is a very big experiment. If he is able to guide the people under his influence without occupying any office, he will have set an example for all of us to copy. It is necessary for us to bring into being workers who would want no office and yet would render as effective service as the strongest official. Such men and women are the pride of a nation. They are its reserve force.

There is yet another reflection that arises from the interesting situation. Why should all of us possess property? Why should not we, after a certain time, dispossess ourselves of all property? Unscrupulous merchants do this for dishonest purposes. Why may we not do it for a moral and a great purpose? For a Hindu it was the usual thing at a certain stage. Every good Hindu is expected, after having lived the household life for a certain period, to enter upon a life of non-possession of property. Why may we not revive the noble tradition? In effect it merely amounts to this that, for maintenance, we place ourselves at the mercy of those to whom we transfer our property. To me the idea is attractive. In the innumerable cases of such honourable trust, there is hardly one case in a million of abuse of trust. Of course, there are moral considerations arising out of such transactions. Take the instance of father and son. If the son is as good a non-co-operator as the father, why should the father tempt his son by burdening him with ownership of property? Such considerations will always arise and the moral worth of a person is tested by his ability in delicately balancing cross problems of ethics. How such a practice can be worked without giving a handle to dishonest persons can only be determined after long experimenting. No one, however, need be deterred from trying the experiment for fear of the example being abused. The divine author of the *Gita* was not deterred from delivering the message of the 'Song Celestial', although he probably knew that it would be tortured to justify every variety of vice including murder.

VAIKOM

The Vaikom Satyagraha has entered upon probably the last stage.[1] The newspapers report and the report is confirmed by private advice—that the Travancore authorities have now practically abandoned the satyagrahis to the tender mercies of *goondas*. This is euphemistically called the organized opposition of the orthodox section. Everyone knows that orthodoxy is often unscrupulous. It has as a rule prestige and public opinion behind it in

[1] *Vide*, "Interview to Associated Press of India", 1-7-1924.

comparison with the reformer. It, therefore, does things with impunity which the poor reformer dare not. But what baffles one is the attitude of the Travancore authorities. Are they conniving at this open violence against the innocent satyagrahis? Has such an advanced state like Travancore abdicated its elementary function of protection of life and property? The violence of the *goondas* is said to be of a particularly barbarous type. They blind the eyes of volunteers by throwing lime into them.

The representatives from Kerala asked me if they should not have a resolution of the Congress supporting the movement. I told them that I did not like the idea. What they wanted was moral support. It would have been given by the Committee for the asking, if they had sent a resolution to the President. My responsibility in dissuading them was, therefore, serious. But I am convinced that all local movements must be self-reliant and that the A.I.C.C. should give its moral support only in exceptional cases. The talk with the members was followed by the resolution regarding the Sikhs. The members when they found me settling the draft of that resolution asked me again whether, in view of the Sikh resolution, I should not relent. I told them that the Congress had already taken up the Sikh cause and that, therefore, it could not very well now refrain without giving rise to the suspicion it had given up the Sikh cause. The members did not perhaps appreciate my reasoning. But they cheerfully submitted to it. The Travancore authorities may, however, be respectfully told that the Congress cannot watch barbarity with philosophic indifference. So long as satyagraha is met by ordinary State processes, the movement must remain local. But the letting loose of the *goondas* on the devoted heads of the satyagrahis is bound to gather round the satyagrahis the full weight of all-India public opinion.

A word now to the organizers of Vaikom Satyagraha. The challenge of the *goondas* must be taken up. But the satyagrahis must not lose their heads. The khaddar dress of the volunteers is said to have been torn from them and burnt. This is all most provoking. They must remain cool under every provocation and courageous under the hottest fire. Loss even of a few hundred lives will not be too great a price to pay for the freedom of the unapproachables. Only the martyrs must die clean. Satyagrahis, like Caesar's wife, must be above suspicion.

An Apology

I have much pleasure in printing the following letter. In my ote on Barabanki, I did not give the name of my informant.

But I cannot withhold the name any longer. I wish all will be as ready as Mr. Shuaib to admit mistakes and slow to believe stories about Hindu and Mussalman misdeeds. The reader will share my gladness that the charge against the Hindu Municipal Commissioners of Barabanki was baseless. I apologize to them for having been the unconscious instrument of doing an injustice to them.

To the Editor, *Young India*

Sir,

Since I wrote to you about conditions at Barabanki, I am informed by a Mussalman member of the District Congress Committee, Barabanki, who is also a member of the Provincial Congress Committee, U.P., that the facts are not as they were reported to me. All that took place was that, in place of the old rule of Barabanki Municipal Board, by virtue of which applications to the Board could only be given in Urdu script, the Board passed a law that they could be given either in Devanagri or Urdu characters—a law which I personally consider to be just and fair. I am very sorry that I supplied you with facts which have turned out to be are incorrect. My only excuse is that my informants were very reliable persons. I do not intend to name them, but should like to say that they are both of them office-bearers of the Congress and recognized by all to be absolutely free from communal prejudices. It was because of this that I readily believed what they said. I, however, do not wish to blame those gentlemen who, I may in passing say, fully believed those facts themselves. The mistake is all mine. I should have thoroughly ascertained the facts before writing about them to you even though they were reported to me by persons whom I considered perfectly reliable. I shall know how to act in future. But for the present I can only express my sincere and profound regrets for having been an unconscious instrument in giving publicity to facts likely to affect adversely Hindu-Muslim relations which are strained enough already.

Yours, etc.,
Shuaib Qureshi

Cordial Relations

Mr. K. Rajagopalachari of Tirupati sends the following by way of a variety in the unbroken series of unpleasantnesses between Hindus and Mussalmans:

As you seem to have been presented with the dark side only of Hindu-Musim tension, I wish to present you with the bright side of it also.

Tirupati is a small place with a population of 18,000 people of whom about 500 are Mussalmans, the rest being Hindus. You know it is one of the sacred places of Hindus and men from all parts of India visit this place in thousands daily. Naturally the Hindus are very influential, the head of the temple being a northern Indian Bairagi and extremely influential with Government. The Mussalmans are all traders and some of them are leading merchants in the place. The Mussalmans are new-comers, but the relationship between them and the Hindus is as cordial as possible. In September last, one of the leading Mussalmans of the place, in celebrating the birth-month of the Prophet, had put paper festoons right across the street (the only main street in the town) and a red cloth in which was written 'Mahomed's birth-month celebration' on one side and 'Prophet of all prophets' on the other side. Hindus were silently murmuring protests against the latter writing on the cloth. But no trouble arose in any of the previous years. However, the temple authorities stopped a number of processions of the Hindu Deity through that street lest they should create some trouble between Hindus and Mussalmans; more with a view it appears to respect the sentiments of Muslims. One day, however, the procession of the Deity through the street could not be prevented. The temple authorities took the precaution of speaking to the Muslim friends beforehand and had arranged to get the cloth alone removed when the Deity had to pass that street. The Muslim friend seems to have consented, but, when the Deity actually came near his shop, the Hindus wanted even the paper festoons to be removed, while the Muslim friend refused to remove even the cloth. I happened to pass that way then and found a large number of Hindus assembled in front of the shop and about a hundred Muslims had also gathered to have a fight if necessary. I could not convince the Hindus that there was nothing wrong in the Deity passing through the festoons nor the Mussalmans that they would not lose their prestige by removing them at once. The Hindus were in no mood to listen to me, for a large number of them were drunk and no respectable Hindu was present there. When I argued with such of the Hindus as were sober that it was not derogatory to Hinduism to take our Deity underneath the festoons, they said I was pro-Muslim and even conspired to beat me. Meanwhile, two or three responsible temple officials appeared on the scene and dramatically announced that the Deity should be taken underneath the festoons and no police help was needed so far as they were concerned. The attitude of Muslims at once changed. They suggested that their own men should go up and raise the paper festoons so that they might not touch any portion of the sacred Deity and its ornamentations and that the cloth should be removed at once. The matter ended smoothly that night. The next morning, a hakim friend, a good Mussalman, as soon as he came to know of the trouble the previous evening, ordered the festoons all to be removed

or he would come and remove them himself. The festoons were at once removed. The temple authorities, even a few days after, declined to take the Deity through the street, because, one of them told me subsequently, they did not want to create the impression in the minds of the Muslims that the Hindus, being larger in number and more powerful, were coercing them into doing things which otherwise they would not do. Many of the prominent Hindus agreed with us that what we did was commendable and we had their sympathies.

The Hakim Sahib, two or three days later, sent for me and told me that he was ashamed to look up in the face of any Hindu of their magnanimity, in the face of comparative unreasonableness on the part of Muslims. A few days after that, both Hindus and Muslims closed their shops, the Hindus showing their sympathy towards Mussalmans during Ramzan. Next time, the Muslims closed their shops along with the Hindus on the new moon day to please the Hindus and the mutual friendly relationship still continues and I am sure will continue for ever. For a long time, there was only one mosque in this town and recently another mosque has been erected. The Hindus refrain from music even in front of the new mosque today. The Hindus are so powerful that, if they only care, they can ignore the Mussalmans and have their own way, but they are conducting themselves very considerately towards the Mussalmans and even yield when necessary. By such behaviour, we have created in the minds of Mussalmans a certain amount of confidence in us, and many sensitive Mussalmans are ashamed even to talk of the incident of September last. By our yielding to their demands, even though unreasonable, we disarm them of all opposition. Our educated people can do and undo things. The masses follow us, and if we lead them aright, there will be no Hindu-Muslim trouble and we could reach our goal quickly.

Let us hope that the cordial relations between the two sections will continue for ever.

Young India, 3-7-1924

180. *LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU*

July 3, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I have today read a letter which has upset me.[1] I was wondering whether, if I wrote to you about it, I would be abusing the privilege of friendship. The voice within me tells me I must not decide that question but must leave it to you. If you regard it as an abuse, you will forgive the offence and dismiss the letter from your consideration.[2]

The writer has sent me the enclosed cutting (from *The Leader*).[3] I had not read it before. He says that at another dinner you are reported to have said: "Water has been called pure. But wine is made after being thrice distilled. It is, therefore, purer than water."[4] You will not misunderstand me. I have nothing to say to your return to wine-drinking, if you have. But, if the report is to be relied upon, I cannot but be grieved that you, who lead the anti-liquor campaign, should publicly drink it and, what is worse, chaff at teetotalism.

I must not say more. Needless to say I shall await your reply with considerable anxiety.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I know that if a man drinks privately, he may drink publicly too. A public man, however, may not drink publicly, if he is

[1] The letter is not available. It evidently referred to the drinking of wine by Motilal Nehru at a dinner in Simla at which he was the chief guest. *Vide* M. R. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, Vol. II, pp. 331-6.

[2] Motilal Nehru, in a lengthy reply of July 10, wrote with reference to this: "Let me at the outset assure you that so far from regarding your request for information as an abuse of the privilege of friendship, I look upon it as your right as well as your duty to know where you stand with those who, in spite of your public declaration of distrust in them, are trying, for all they are worth, to be able to work with and under you."

[3] The report in *The Leader* quoted by Jayakar had made sarcastic comments on the incident.

[4] These remarks, Motilal Nehru pointed out, were only an allusion to a description of wine in Persian poetry.

likely to offend. I distinguish between private drinking and secret drinking.[1]

M. K. G.

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, p. 332

181. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Thursday, Jeth Vad Amas [July 3, 1924][2]

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Sardar Mangalsingh[3] was here for about a fortnight. I got your letter after he left the day before yesterday. Otherwise he would have certainly come there.

The real cause of the breakdown this time was Lord Reading[4] himself. Almost everything was decided. I still hope that the movement[5] will be free from bloodshed. But who can foretell?

Dinkarrao, it appears, has again gone away somewhere.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3179. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] Motilal Nehru's rejoinder to this was: "To me, it is clear that deceiving men by keeping up false appearances is worse than offending them, and I must express my utter inability to understand how you can possibly reconcile yourself to the suggestion that I might drink privately if at all. I must also respectfully differ from the distinction you draw between private drinking and secret drinking. In my humble opinion, it is a distinction without a difference."

[2] In 1924, the *Amavasya* in the Vikram calendar month of *Jyestha* fell on July 1 and 2. Thursday, however, fell on July 3.

[3] One of the leaders of the Akali movement

[4] The then Viceroy and Governor-General of India

[5] The Akali movement

182. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

[After *July 3, 1924*][1]

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I got both your letters. I shall wire to you when I leave for Delhi.

I do not think any praise of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is overdone. I do not consider her an ideal Indian woman, but she was an ideal ambassador for the work in East Africa. I must admit, nevertheless, that I see in people only their virtues and I try not to notice their shortcomings. This has done no harm to me, or to the persons I have praised.

Unless Maulana Mahomed Ali wants me to go earlier[2], I shall not go to Delhi before September.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

BIRLA HOUSE
HARDWAR

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6028. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Presumably, the letter was written after the publication of the article "Bombay, Remember Sarojini", 3-7-1924.

[2] In response to Mahomed Ali's invitation, Gandhiji left for Delhi on August 16, 1924.

183. *LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI*[1]

July 4, 1924

DEAR LALAJI,

I am glad that you have ultimately reached where you ought to be. I do hope you will not leave the place before you have completely recovered.

I hope you are not perturbed by what is happening here. I cannot co-operate with the Swarajists on the same platform. Co-operation will be possible, no doubt, if both of us work independently. The Congress should devote itself to one sphere at a time. How can it give its attention to the Government and the people at the same time?

Yours sincerely,
GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Lala Lajpat Rai : Jivani, p. 418

184. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

Ashadh Sud 2 [July 4, 1924][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got your letter and postcard at the same time.

It was good that you stayed there for a month more. The more our trust in God grows and we realize our littleness, the more we become free from worry. Can worry lighten our grief?

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 448. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] The original letter, which must have been in English, is not available.
[2] The postmark bears this date.

185. MESSAGE TO NO-CHANGERS[1]

July 4, 1924

To the No-changers I have but one word. No one can prevent us from working but ourselves. There is no active programme but that of hand-spinning and production and distribution of khaddar. To this, therefore, all young and old men and women should apply themselves. If our neighbours do not listen, we get all the more time for spinning. No true worker can, therefore, complain of having no work to do. I regard national schools as aids to the khaddar programme.

M. K. GANDHI

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-7-1924

186. TELEGRAM TO G. NALGOLA

[SABARMATI,
On or after *July 5, 1924*][2]

COLLEGE MUST NOT BE CLOSED.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 8988

[1] This was addressed to the No-changers in Bengal through Hardayal Nag, a prominent Congressman.

[2] This was in reply to a telegram from G. Nalgola of July 5, 1924, which read : "You have heard about Dacca National College from Prafulla Ghose. Wire what we to do. Students." *Vide* "Telegram to Students, Dacca National College", on or after 9-7-1924.

187. *LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*

Ashadh Sud 5 [*July 7, 1924*][1]

PU. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. We have no control over the future, we do not know the future. Even in the smallest things we are mere instruments; why then should we grieve? We must keep looking at what happens, go on doing what appears to us as our duty and be cheerful. This covers the whole of religion. Why not regard as happiness what you consider misery? Through misery you have learnt to endure. There is happiness in contentment. If we go in search of happiness, misery comes to our lot, and by enduring misery we attain to happiness. We are born to labour and if our life comes to an end while we are yet working and doing service, it will have been fulfilled.

Please let me know when you decide to come here.[2] I hope both the mother and the new-born child are happy.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6013. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

188. *TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

[On or after *July 7, 1924*]

NOTHING WRONG ONLY WEAK.[3]

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 8990

[1] & [2] From the reference to the addressee's proposed visit to the Ashram, the letter appears to have been written before July 22, 1924; *vide* "Letter to Gangabehn Vaidya", 22-7-1924. In 1924, *Ashadh Sud* 5 fell on July 7.

[3] This was in reply to Mathuradas's telegram to Krishnadas, inquiring about Gandhiji's health, which was received on July 7, 1924.

189. TELEGRAM TO STUDENTS, DACCA NATIONAL COLLEGE

[On or after *July 9, 1924*][1]

IF NO HELP FORTHCOMING STUDENTS MUST ORGANIZE STUDY AND WORK AMONG THEMSELVES.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 8993

190. NOTES

COUNCIL-ENTRY

After the closing of the session of the A.I.C.C., Pandit Motilalji went to Rajkot for a domestic visit and halted at Ahmedabad on his way to Bombay. We met during the halt. In the course of our discussion, I happened to say that it would be disastrous if the Swarajists retired from the Councils at this stage. He immediately reminded me of my previous writing[2] that, if I could convince the Swarajists, I would ask them to withdraw. I said I saw no contradiction between the two. The one statement is permanent and based upon principle, the other is applicable to the immediate present only and is based on expedience. There is no doubt that the Swarajists have created a stir in the Government circles. There is no doubt, too, that any withdrawal at the present moment will be misunderstood as a rout and weakness. As a matter of fact, so far as the A.I.C.C. is concerned, the Swarajist position has been never so strong as it is now. They are entitled to claim a moral victory. Believing as they do in giving battle to the Government in the Assembly and the Councils, they have no reason whatsoever for withdrawing from the Legislative bodies at the present moment. Their withdrawal at this juncture can only add to the present depression in the country and strengthen the hands of a Government

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from the students of National College, Dacca, dated July 9, 1924, which read: "Telegram suppressed by college authority. Principal and professors faithless in school boycott. How to read under them. Wire clearly to Jilani thirty Jindabahar Dacca." *Vide* "Telegram to G. Nalgola", on or after 5-7-1924.

[2] *Vide* "Statement to Associated Press of India", 22-5-1924.

which wants to give nothing to justice and which yields gracelessly and reluctantly to pressure.

The only opportune time for the Swarajists to come out will be when we the whole-hoggers have become active workers of our own programme, which we consider to be the only one that can bring us swaraj, and shown progressive success, or when the Swarajists are by bitter experience convinced that the Councils can only give condiments but no bread, and that, therefore, they should give their whole time and attention to the constructive programme.

The key to the situation lies in the hands of us whole-hoggers. We claim that the masses are behind us. I at least feel so. If they are, we must show it by results—not by merely securing a majority at the Congress, but by showing substantial work. All the No-changers in all the provinces cannot show adequate results. The fault is probably not theirs. We like the programme, but we have not evolved the capacity for working it. But if that be the true diagnosis, we must now work, for work—not words—will give us the capacity. Then and not till then, when we have shown substantial results, will the Swarajists of their own accord come away from the Councils.

There is, in my opinion, no room for a centre party. A centre party is a party of vacillation. It floats with the tide, whereas the time has come for us all to decide one way or the other. Those who believe in the Councils must remain in or, being out, enter them or organize work for them. It will be disastrous for them and for the country if, in spite of their belief in the Councils, they retired from them for fear of public opinon. No one who wants swaraj can dare idle away his or her time.

My Position

I would like to retain my hold on the Congress not by a fictitious or manufactured majority—not merely because my withdrawal is likely to create disorganization and depression. Even that must be faced if I cannot make my programme acceptable. Enervation is bound to be followed by rejuvenation. The Congress had become a reality in 1920-21. There is fear of its becoming an unreality worse than before 1920. In 1920 there was no organized dishonesty. Then there was no limitation of delegates, no obligation upon Congressmen to do any continuous work and no purse. Now we have a limitation to the number of delegates, resolutions are almost all addressed to them and we have even now a purse such as the Congress never possessed at any time before 1920.

The natural result must, therefore, be dishonesty if we are not incessantly watchful. Swarajists tell me that the No-changers have dishonestly worked the constitution and the latter pay the same compliment to the former. I do not know the truth. But I do know that it bodes ill for swaraj if we cannot or do not work the Congress constitution with the utmost honesty.

I would like the Congress to become progressively popular. I would, therefore, man it with mercantile, artisan and agricultural classes. I would, therefore, also keep all the boycotts intact and have on the executive only those who fully carry them out in their own persons. Those who cannot but still believe in them can help those who do carry them out, but who are inexperienced in the management of institutions or who are not known to the public as workers. It should be the privilege of educated classes to be behind and push into public life those who have hitherto kept aloof.

In an organization thus conceived, privileged classes have no place on the executive. They can all be in the annual deliberative assembly. Pandit Motilalji suggests a small standing deliberative assembly. I should not mind it. It would perhaps be an advantage to have such a body with all the powers of the Congress. There is no doubt that the constitution requires some drastic changes. We must secure efficiency and swiftness. And these cannot be secured even under a perfect constitution, if we who have to work it are not honest or do not want efficiency and swiftness.

A Deserved Rebuke

The Punjab Government have administered the public a deserved rebuke in its *communique* intimating its intention of prosecuting those Hindu and Mussalman sheets which ply their calling of abusing rival religions. Here is the *communique*:

> The Punjab Government has for some time had under notice the fact that certain newspapers, both Hindu and Mohammedan, published in the province, have been issuing abusive and inflammatory matter regarding each other and the religions which their rivals represent. The Government has anxiously watched the course of this campaign in the hope that the scurrility and, in some cases unfortunately, the obscenity with which it has been conducted would disgust all respectable members of both communities and that the papers in question would find that their articles held no appeal for any section of the public. This hope has, however, unfortunately not been realized, and Government has now been compelled to start criminal proceedings against two of the offending newspapers. Government relies on the good sense of the leaders of both communities to assist it by all means in their power

> in suppressing these most objectionable expressions of religious animosity, which constitute a grave menace to the existence of good relations between the two great communities.

It must be regretfully confessed that the public could have stopped these sheets if they had actively worked against them. It is to be even now hoped that the publishers of these sheets will apologize for their irreligious behaviour and stop their publications.

Posts under Swaraj

Mr. Ali Hassan of Patna takes exception to my suggestion that swaraj service should be filled on the sole ground of merit and not according to communal proportion. He cites the general statement that most of the best posts are today monopolized by the Hindus. I have not the statistics before me so as to enable me to test the proposition. But my opinion would remain unaffected even if the proposition was proved. The existing Government, whose chief concern is about its own stability, ensures its safety by conciliating the most clamant party. We can deduce nothing from the state of affairs found under it. The only way of doing justice is to grant special facilities to educationally backward communities for receiving education. It is the duty of the State to level up those of its citizens who may be backward and it is equally its duty to make efficiency and character the only test in the matter of making appointments. The greatest impartiality should certainly be ensured in making them, but there can be no hard and fast rule as to communal percentages in the matter.

Who Are Hindus?

In this connection Mr. Ali Hassan makes this curious statement. He says:

> The Hindus of today practically mean Brahmins and *Kayasthas*. They have no right whatever to secure advantages by the inclusion of untouchables amongst them while they are not prepared to treat them equally. The lower-caste people and untouchables are quite distinct bodies altogether and they ought to be treated better. The Hindus and Muslims both should be considerate to them as well as to other minorities.

I would not have noticed this statement but for my knowledge that such belief is held by many Mussalmans. The writer, of course, goes a step further than most and would regard all lower-class Hindus as distinct from Hindus. This is a dangerous belief for a Mussalman to hold because it seeks to decide who are Hindus and who are not. Now 'Brahmins and *Kayasthas*'—not Kshatriyas—are,

according to the writer, the only Hindus. Then, the Hindus are in a hopeless minority. As a matter of fact, nobody can decide for another what he is. The untouchables have decided for themselves what they are. I have not yet met an untouchable who has not claimed to be a Hindu. Naturally, I exclude converts.

Who Is Superior as Administrator?

The writer further says that since I have admitted that Mussalmans are better than Hindus as administrators, there should be no difficulty in my agreeing to an equal proportion of Mussalmans receiving administrative posts. I have not made any such admission. He has a postcard[1] from me in which a 'not' has been inadvertently omitted. I informed him of the omission as soon as I saw the postcard printed in a newspaper. Mussalmans are superior to Hindus in several matters, but I have never considered them to be superior as administrators. I would like to be able to give the palm to them in everything. Then there would be no cause for quarrels and jealousies. Jealousies arise as a rule between equals in the same game. Lawyers have been known to be jealous of one another, but I have not known them to be jealous, say, of doctors in their profession. But supposing that Mussalmans make, as a matter of fact, superior administrators, they should have no difficulty in an impartial and open competition in securing not merely fifty per cent but cent per cent of posts and I should not shed a single tear over the discomfiture of the Hindus. I have already informed Maulana Shaukat Ali that, when I become the first President of the Indian Republic or some such thing, I propose to appoint him as the first Commander-in-Chief and his brother as the Minister of Education. That bribery probably accounts for our friendship, but let the Mussalmans beware lest they draw the inference that I regard Mussalmans as a rule superior to the others as soldiers and educationists. My own opinion is that, on the whole, we are all about equal and, under fair auspices, we can, if we make the effort, beat one another in open competition.

A Correction

With reference to my note in *Young India*,[2] giving the information that the Rewa State had a law similar to that of Bhopal, a correspondent writes:

[1] This postcard is not available.

[2] *Vide* "Notes", 19-6-1924.

> No order is in force in the Rewa State prohibiting the conversion of a Hindu to Mohammedanism nor is there any punishment prescribed for the convert or for the agent bringing about the conversion.
>
> It is, however, true that before a Hindu can be converted to Islam, he must obtain the Durbar's sanction. Any person infringing the order renders himself liable to prosecution and punishment in the ordinary course for disobeying the order. This order is meant to exercise a salutary check on conversion where the main end in view is some pecuniary gain, prostitution or other illegal object.
>
> The order also enables the State to keep figures regarding conversion up to date. This order cannot be taken to prohibit or otherwise affect *bona-fide* conversion from Hinduism to Islam.

I am glad to be able to publish the correction which my correspondent assures me is authentic. It does seem to me, however, that the condition of prior consent of the Durbar is more than a salutary check. Why should an adult of full understanding be obliged to obtain consent? Who will determine the *bona fides* of such conversion? To a Hindu all conversion to another faith must appear a fall and, therefore, he must approach every case of conversion with a bias against it. I would, therefore, respectfully suggest to the Durbar to remove the clause about consent. Registration of conversions will be sufficient insurance against bogus conversions. It would be interesting to know how the law as it is has worked in the State. All Hindu States will best guard Hinduism by becoming themselves model States and removing abuses that have crept into Hinduism. What I would like to see in the Rewa State is a law against untouchability. No external safeguards can possibly keep alive a system that is dying of internal corruption.

False Pride?

I understand that the Khadi Board which is employing a large number of young men for the khadi work is finding it difficult to get the right kind of men to give their whole time to the work. They want to earn their livelihood by other means. In my opinion, this disinclination to accept payment for work is not a healthy sign. We want an army of whole-time workers. In a poor country like India, it is not possible to get such workers without pay. I see not only no shame, but I see credit in accepting pay for national work honestly and well done. We shall have to engage many paid whole-time workers when swaraj is established. Shall we then feel less pride in belonging to the swaraj service than Englishmen do in belonging to the Indian Civil Service? How much more justification is there now when no one can be guaran-

teed absolute permanence, much less pension? Is it not also a grim irony that, when lawyers are said to have gone back to practice for want of maintenance, the Khadi Board is hard put to it to find suitable paid workers?

There is another matter also that needs attention. When a person volunteers his service for national work, whether with or without pay, he undertakes to come under all the discipline of an ordinary employee. If anything, the discipline is stricter in the case of a volunteer. He may not, therefore, absent himself without leave. He may not even invite imprisonment except under permission. Civil disobedience has to be civil in more senses than one. There can be no bravado, no impetuousness about it. It has to be an ordered, well-thought-out, humble offering.

Ladies to the Rescue

Shrimati Hemprobha Mazumdar, a member of the A.I.C.C., has left this note for me:

> I think unless the ladies of our country take special charge of spinning, the movement cannot be successful. So I pray that special appeal to all the members of A.I.C.C. be made to take special care for the training of women for spinning.

I heartily endorse the remark and would like to add that many more things are impossible without the help of the women of India. The only question is: 'who shall do it and how?' Many sisters are doing the work, but many more are necessary. There should be whole-time women workers as there are men. Some I know there are in the field, but they are all too few. I invite the fair writer to make the commencement herself. She can do so by setting apart a time specially for spinning herself and mastering the science by carding, testing cottons, understanding the counts, testing their strength, etc. She can begin, too, with her neighbours by interesting them in the national occupation and she will find that the circle will widen. I would certainly appeal to husbands to let their wives organize the work. The case of Bengal is, perhaps, the most difficult because the ladies, whether Hindu or Mussalman, observe the *purdah*. I promise that whoever commences the work with faith and earnestness will find it most interesting and, from a national stand-point, most profitable.

Bakr-Id

This festival is at all times a time of anxiety for both Hindus and Mussalmans. It should not be if we have toleration and respect for one another. Why should Hindus interfere with Mussalmans

who believe in animal sacrifice and who, therefore, offer even cows in sacrifice? Similarly, why should Mussalmans sacrifice the cow or perform the sacrifice in a manner purposely to offend Hindu susceptibility? Why should not Mussalmans repeat the noble performance of 1921 when they, for the sake of respecting their Hindu neighbours' sentiments, took it upon their heads to save the cow and actually succeeded in saving hundreds as Hindus themselves acknowledged? Surely, on that festival day, Mussalmans should specially exert themselves to cultivate affectionate feelings towards Hindus and the latter should respect the former's rites and ceremonies even though they may be repugnant to them, the Hindus, just as they expect the Mussalmans to respect their idol worship even though it is repugnant to their feelings. God will hold each one of us responsible for his own actions, not for his neighbour's.

Barabanki Again

I have received two illuminating letters about my note on Barabanki, one from a Mussalman and the other from a Hindu. Though they are written independently of one another, they agree on facts which they both deal with. There are a few new facts in each. Both seem to give an impartial version. I suppress the letters because their publication can do no good. The facts disclosed do no credit to anybody except the writers. One thing, however, is quite clear that the capture of the municipality has been an apple of discord between the Hindus and the Mussalmans of the place. Apart even from non-co-operation, it seems to me to be absolutely clear that, where there is no heart-unity between the two communities, non-co-operators—whether Hindu or Mussalman—should refrain from entering municipal or district boards. Even where one party is eager to enter, the other should refrain. Before the unseemly squabble in the municipality, both the communities were, it is stated, living in perfect harmony. Now because of municipal contest, there is tension not only among the rivals in the municipality, but it has permeated the whole town. I do hope that Barabanki will retrieve its once fair name by reverting to the old cordiality.

A Repudiation

With reference to the reported interview with the *Tiya* priest, Shri Narayana Guru Swami, I gladly publish the following letter from Mr. Narayanan:

> I was very much pained to see your note in *Young India* regarding the views of His Holiness Shri Narayana Guru Swami on the present methods of satyagraha at Vaikom. A few days before that, I happened

to see the Swamiji with whom I had a fairly long conversation over the Vaikom struggle. The Swamiji himself told me at the outset that one Mr. Kesavan, who had a talk with him some time back in a railway train, has misrepresented him to the public by publishing an unauthorized account of the so-called interview in the vernacular Press. First of all, Swamiji is not in the habit of granting interviews to Press representatives. But he freely expresses his opinions to whomsoever he talks with on any subject. Very recently, Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari also had a free talk with the Swamiji on the Vaikom affairs; and it is said that the Swamiji expressed himself in unmistakable terms his approval of the present methods of satyagraha at Vaikom.

What the Swamiji says is this. It is true that he spoke in favour of entering temples and sitting with others to dine, because he has always been an advocate of temple-entry and interdining. But he lays great stress on non-violence. He says that even advancing into the prohibited area in the absence of barricades is an act of violence, because the prohibitory board at the boundary line carrying the Government order itself is equivalent to a barricade of policemen who simply repeat the same order as the volunteers advance. He is of opinion that, so long as the prohibitory board is there, the volunteers should remain at the boundary line, praying God to give courage to the oppositionists to change their mind and cause the removal of the board. He might have told Mr. Kesavan that, if the volunteers may advance into the prohibitory area disobeying the Government order put up in the prohibitory board, they may as well scale the barricades and advance. This, the Swamiji says, might have been misunderstood by Mr. Kesavan. He drew my special attention to the fact that the volunteers must be of exemplary character, and that they must not even show signs of distemper at the greatest provocation. The Swamiji also expressed the view that the proposed procession on foot of 500 caste Hindus from Vaikom to Trivandrum will produce a great moral effect on all concerned. Lastly, he wished all success to the movement saying that, if carried on in the same strain as at present, success is not far off.

After the foregoing was prepared, I received the following authoritative letter:

The report of the interview K. M. Kesavan had with me in the railway train, published in the *Desabhimani*, seems to have been prepared without correctly understanding my meaning. That report was not shown to me before publication, nor did I see it soon after it was published. The removal of untouchability is quite essential for the attainment of social harmony. I have no objection whatsoever to the satyagraha movement started by Mahatma Gandhi to fight this evil nor to the co-opera-

tion of people in that movement. Any method of work that may be adopted for eradicating the evil of untouchability must be strictly non-violent.

NARAYANA GURU

MUTTAKKADU,
27-6-1924

HALF A DOZEN AND SIX

My remarks on the unreadable pamphlet on the Prophet and on the scurrilous sheet *Shaitan* have brought me a sheaf-ful of letters from Arya Samajists who, whilst admitting the force and truth of my remarks, say that some Mussalman sheets are no better and that they began the abuse and the Arya Samajists followed by way of retaliation. The writers have sent me some of these sheets. I have suffered the pain of going through a few of the extracts. The language in some parts is simply revolting. I cannot disfigure these pages by reproducing it. I have also been favoured with a life, by a Mussalman, of Swami Dayanand. I am sorry to say it is largely a distortion of the great reformer. Nothing that he did has escaped the author's venom. One of my correspondents complains bitterly that my remarks have emboldened the Musslaman speakers and writers to become more abusive than before towards the Arya Samaj and the Samajists. One of them sends me an account of a recently-held Lahore meeting where unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the Samaj. Needless to say, such writings and speeches can have no sympathy from me. In spite of the opinion I have expressed, I claim to be one of the many humble admirers of the founder of the Samaj. He pointed out the many abuses that were corrupting Hindu society. He inculcated a taste for Sanskrit learning. He challenged superstitious beliefs. By the chastity of his own life he raised the tone of the society in which he lived. He taught fearlessness and gave a new hope to many a despairing youth. Nor am I oblivious of his many services to the national cause. The Samaj has supplied it with many true and self-sacrificing workers. It has encouraged female education among Hindu girls as perhaps no other Hindu institution save the Brahmo Samaj has done. Ignorant critics have not hesitated to insinuate that my remarks about Shraddhanandji were due to his criticism of me. But the insinuation does not prevent me from re-acknowledging the pioneer work done by him in Gurukul. Whilst, therefore, I am unable to withdraw a single word of my criticism of the Samaj, the *Satyarth Prakash*, Rishi Dayanand and Swami Shraddhanandji, I repeat that my criticism was that of a friend with the desire that the Samaj may render greater service by

ridding itself of the shortcomings to which I drew attention. I want it to march with the times, give up the polemical spirit and, whilst adhering to its own opinions, extend that toleration to other faiths which it claims for itself. I want it to keep a watch on its workers and stop all discreditable writings. It is no answer in justification that Mussalmans commenced the campaign of calumny. I do not know whether they did or not. But I do know that they would have been tired of repetition if there had been no retaliation. I have not even urged the Samajsits to give up their *shuddhi*. But I do urge them, as I would urgeMussalm ans, to revise the present idea of *shuddhi*.

To the Mussalman writers and speakers, of whose conduct I have received the letters referred, I venture to point out that they neither enhance their own reputation nor that of the religion they profess by unrestrained abuse of the opponent. They can gain nothing, they cannot serve Islam, by swearing at the Samaj and the Samajists.

Young India, 10-7-1924

191. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES–X

Some Convict-warders

(2)

Adan was a young Somali soldier who was sentenced to ten years' hard labour for desertion from the British Army, which he had joined during the War. He was transferred by the Aden Jail authorities. Adan had served four years when we were admitted. He was practically illiterate. He could read the Koran with difficulty, but could not copy it correctly, if at all. He was able to speak Urdu fairly fluently and was anxious to learn Urdu. With the permission of the Superintendent, I tried to teach him, but the learning of the alphabet proved too great a strain upon him and he left it. With all that he was quick-witted and sharp as a needle. He took the greatest interest in religious matters. He was a devout Mussalman, offered his prayers regularly including the midnight one, and never missed the *Ramzan* fast. The rosary was his constant companion. When he was free, he used to recite selections from the Koran. He would often engage me in a discussion on complete fasts according to the Hindu custom as also on ahimsa. He was a brave man. He was very courteous, but never cringing. He was of an excitable nature and, therefore, often quarrelled with the *bardasi* or his fellow-

warder. We had, therefore, sometimes to arbitrate between them. Being a soldier and amenable to reason, he would accept the award, but he would put his case boldly and cogently. Adan was the longest with us. I treasure Adan's affection. He was most attentive to me. He would see to it that I got my food at the appointed time. He was sad if I ever became ill and anticipated all my wants. He would not let me exert myself for anything. He was anxious to be discharged or at least to be transferred to Aden. I tried hard. I drew up petitions[1] for him. The Superintendent too, tried his best. But the decision rested with the Aden authorities. Hope was held out to him that he would be discharged before the end of last year. I do hope he is already discharged. The little service I rendered gave rise to deep personal attachment. It was a sad parting when Adan was transferred to another part of the prison. I must not omit to mention that, when I was organizing spinning and carding in the jail, Adan, though one of his hands was disabled, helped most industriously at making slivers. He became very proficient in the art which he had come to like.

As Shabaskhan was replaced by Adan, Harkaran was replaced by Bhiwa. Much to our agreeable surprise, Bhiwa was a Mahar from Maharashtra and, therefore, an untouchable. Of all the warders we met he was perhaps the most industrious. The reader will be surprised to find that the canker of untouchability has not left even the jails untouched. Poor Bhiwa! He would not enter our cells without considerable hesitation. He would not touch our pots. We quickly set him at rest by telling him that we had not only no prejudices against untouchables, but that we were trying our best to do away with the curse. Shankerlal Banker specially befriended him and made him feel perfectly at home with us. He permitted Bhiwa to be so familiar with him that the former would resent an angry word from Mr. Banker and the latter would even apologize. He induced Bhiwa to apply himself to studies and taught him also spinning. The result was that Bhiwa became, in an incredibly short space of time, an accomplished spinner and began so to like it that he thought of learning weaving, and earning his living through that occupation when he went out. I cultivated in the jail the habit of drinking hot water and lemon at 4.15 a. m. When I protested against Mr. Banker doing it for me, he initiated Bhiwa into the mystery. Prisoners, though they get up early enough, do not like to leave their matting (which is their bed) at that early hour. Bhiwa, however, immediately responded to his friend's

[1] These are not available.

suggestion. But it was Mr. Banker's business always to wake up Bhiwa at 4 o'clock. When Bhiwa went (he was discharged under special remission), Adan undertook the duty. He will not listen to my doing it myself. And the tradition was kept up even after Mr. Banker's discharge, each outgoing warder initiating the incoming one into all the mysteries. Needless to say, this morning duty was no part of the prison task. Indeed, convicts when they became warders were not expected to do any labour at all. Theirs is but to order.

Even as the best of friends must part some day, Bhiwa bade good-bye. He was permitted to receive from Mr. Banker khaddar caps, khaddar dhotis, khaddar vests and a khaddar blanket. He promised to wear nothing but khaddar outside. Let me hope good Bhiwa, wherever he may be, is keeping the promise.

Bhiwa was followed by Thamu. He too belonged to Maharashtra. Thamu was a mild-mannered warder. He had not much 'go' in him. He would do what he was asked, but did not believe in specially exerting himself. He and Adan, therefore, did not get on quite well together. But Thamu, being timid, always yielded to Adan in the end. He had such a royal time (all had) with us that Thamu did not want to be separated from us. He, therefore, preferred to bear Adan's hard yoke to being transferred. Thamu having come to us a considerable time after Adan, the latter was Thamu's senior with us. It is remarkable how these fictitious seniorities spring up in little places like jails. Yeravda was to us a whole world or, better still, the whole world. Every squabble, every little jar, was a mighty event commanding sustained interest for the day and sometimes even for days. If the jail authorities permitted a jail newspaper to be conducted by the prisoners and for them, it would have a cent per cent circulation, and such toothsome news as properly-cooked dhal, well-dressed vegetables, and sensational items as war of words between prisoners, sometimes even resulting in blows and consequent *khatla* (trial) before the Superintendent, would be as eagerly devoured by the prisoners as the news of big dinner parties and great wars are devoured by the public outside. I make the present of a suggestion to enterprising members of the Assembly that, if they desire fame, they cannot do better than introduce a bill requiring Superintendents of jails to permit the publishing and editing of newspapers by prisoners exclusively for their own use and under strict censorship by the authorities.

To return to Thamu, though he was flabby, as a man he was otherwise as good as any of his predecessors. He took to the charkha like fish to water. In a week's time, he pulled a more even

thread than I did. And after a month, the pupil out-distanced the teacher by a long way. So much so that I grew jealous of Thamu's superiority. I saw too from Thamu's rapid progress that my slow progress was a peculiar defect of mine and that an ordinary person could pull a perfect thread in a month at the outside. Everyone of those who were taught by me excelled me in no time. To Thamu as to Bhiwa, the spinning-wheel had become a welcome companion. They were able to drown the sorrows of separation from their nearest in the soft and gentle music of the wheel. Later on, spinning became Thamu's first work in the morning. He span at the rate of four hours per day.

When we were shifted to the European yard, there were several changes. Among them was a change of warders. Adan was the first to be transferred. Though neither he nor we liked it, we took his transfer bravely. Then came Thamu's turn. Poor fellow, he broke down. He wanted me to try to keep him. I would not do that. I thought it was beyond my province. The authorities had a perfect right to shift whom and where they would. Adan and Thamu were followed by Kunti, a Gurkha, and a Canarese by name Gangappa. The Gurkha was called Goorkha by everybody. He was reserved, but grew 'chummy' later on. For the first few days, he did not know where he was. Probably he thought we would report and involve him on the slightest pretext. But when he saw that we meant no mischief, he came closer to us. But he was soon transferred. Gangappa I have partly described in the introduction to the jail correspondence. He was an elderly man. His almost punctilious observance of rules and his great devotion to duty commanded my admiration. He put his whole soul into whatever he was ordered by the authorities to do. He took up duties which he need not have. He rarely remained idle. He learnt to make and cook chapatis for my companions. His devotion to me personally I shall never forget. No wife or sister could be more unsparing than Gangappa in his attention. He was awake at all times. He took delight in anticipating my wants. He saw to it that all my things were kept spotlessly clean. During my illness, he was my most efficient nurse, because he was the most attentive. When we were transferred to the European yard, Messrs Mansar Ali and Yagnik used to join me at prayer time. Mr. Mansar Ali was transferred to Allahabad for his discharge in due course. Mr. Yagnik, because he needed more intensive and philosophical rather than devotional meditation, dropped out. Gangappa felt that without these friends I would feel lonely at prayer. The very first time that he saw that I was alone at prayer, he quietly took

his seat in front of me. Needless to say, I appreciated the delicate courtesy underlying the action. It was so spontaneous, unofficious, and natural for Gangappa. I do not call it religious in the accepted sense of the term, though, according to my conception, it was truly religious. I always hesitate to invite anybody to these prayer meetings of mine. I did not want them to come for my sake. I did not feel lonely. I realized most at that time the companionship of God. If any one came, I wanted him not for keeping company but for sharing the divine companionship. I, therefore, particularly hesitated to invite the warders. I felt they might join merely out of form, whereas I wanted them to join only if they naturally felt like joining. With Gangappa it was a mixture of pity for me in my loneliness and desire to share with me the sacred half-hour, though he could understand not a word of what I sang save, of course, *Ramanam.* Gangappa drew to the prayer meeting another warder, Annappa, also a Canarese, and later, Mr. Abdul Gani felt impelled to join. I imagine that Mr. Abdul Gani was unconsciously influenced by Gangappa's unobtrusive act of joining me.

The reader will see that I had a uniformly happy experience of these convict-warders. I could not have wished for more devoted companions or more faithful attendants. Paid service would but be a patch upon this and that of friends could only equal it. And yet the pity of it is that society treats such men as criminals and outcastes because they had the misfortune to be convicted. I entirely endorse the remark of the Head Jailor, already quoted by me in a previous chapter[1], that there are in our jails many men who are better than those outside. The reader will now understand why I felt a pang when I heard that I was discharged, and most of the companions who had covered me with so much kindness and whom there was, in my opinion, no occasion to detain any longer in the jails were left behind.

One word more and I must regretfully part with Gangappa. Gangappa always knew his limitations. He would not spin. He said he could not do it. His fingers had not the cunning for it. But he kept the work-room in order, cleaned my wheel and devoted all his spare time to sunning and cleaning the cotton for carding.

Of all the many happy memories of my prison life, I know that those of the company of the convict-warders will perhaps linger the longest.

Young India, 10-7-1924

[1] *Vide* p. 292.

192. SPINNING RESOLUTION

The spinning resolution[1] of the A.I.C.C. is, in my opinion, the most important of all the resolutions of the A.I.C.C. There is an inclination to laugh at it. The members of Congress organizations can demonstrate in a month's time the impropriety of the laugh. Even if the economic value of khaddar be admitted, it will be found on experience that the resolution was necessary to bring about an economic revolution. It is not too much to expect Congress workers to give half an hour's labour to its most popular programme.

Those who voted for the resolution are in honour bound to carry it out. In my opinion, the penalty clause had a proper place in the resolution. An organization has every right to prescribe penalties for a breach by its members of self-imposed conditions. But now that the penalty clause is out, I hope that even the objectors will comply with the resolution.

Its possibilities are immense. Spinning is obligatory on all representative Congressmen. There are, or should be, in every one of the twenty provinces, provincial, district, taluka and village organizations. They have each at least five hundred such representatives. I understand that some provinces have several thousand representatives. But, taking the lowest figure, we get over ten thousand members. Two thousand yards of 10 counts means nearly ten tolas. Therefore, ten thousand members would be sending 2,500 pounds of yarn. That is to say, the representatives would have spun enough yarn to supply five thousand poor men with one vest-length of cloth. Apart from every other consideration, is this labour not worth taking for the sake of the poor? Imagine the effect of such work on the poor people! The knowledge of Congressmen working for them must fill them with a new hope.

Take another consideration. Ten thousand representatives cannot be satisfied with just spinning themselves. They must infect with their zeal those they represent. And thus, khaddar which is supposed to be on the wane will wax again with redoubled force.

The workers being intelligent men and women will learn the science of spinning and will be, therefore, in a position to organize their neighbourhoods for hand-spinning.

[1] *Vide* pp. 267-70.

Moreover, half an hour and ten tolas is the minimum required. As a matter of fact, one spins 100 yards in half an hour with the greatest ease. The minimum, therefore, one can send should be three thousand yards. And half an hour is suggested for the busy worker. Many should be able to spin for one hour. I know some who are now spinning at the rate of two hours per day. The average receipts should, therefore, be at least double the minimum counted by me, i.e., 5,000 yards.

I do not suppose anyone has yet realized what this hand-spinning means. It is nothing less than making national work self-supporting. Here are some figures. I have taken low average rates and low average work.

		Rs. a. p.
Ginning one maund	12 hs.	0 - 8 - 0
Carding 13 pounds seed-free cotton out of 1 md. seed cotton	40 hs.	2 - 8 - 0
Spinning 12½ lbs. 10 counts at the rate of 275 yards per hour	400 hs.	2 - 6 - 0
		Rs. 5 - 6 - 0

Thus, one man working 452 hours (say 450) would earn Rs. 5-6-0 (say Rs. 5). ∴ 450 men working one hour would earn Rs. 5. ∴ 450 men working for thirty days at the rate of 1 hour per day would earn Rs. 150. ∴ 450 men giving one hour daily can support with ease 5 volunteers at the rate of Rs. 30 per month.

And five volunteers can easily organize the whole Congress work among 450 men and women. The united labour for a single item of a large number of persons has illimitable possibilities, though the labour of one person for it may mean practically nothing.

An ardent worker may work out many startling figures. I make a present of three propositions to be so worked:

1. If hand-spinning in a poor district is chiefly paid, it can remove its poverty.

2. If spinning in a well-to-do district is mainly voluntary, it can support all the volunteers that may be needed.

3. Every village school can defray at least half its expenses if the school children are made to work at all the processes up to spinning for at least 3 hours per school-day.

I need not point out that no such results are possible if khaddar does not become as saleable as a postage stamp. It would be criminal if it does not become so in a country which grows more

than enough cotton for its wants, whose population is used to spinning, which has all the accessories necessary for it and which has a very large, starving population waiting to be organized for such work.

If this work is to be done efficiently and economically, the Provincial Secretaries and others will have to carry out to the full the instructions they may receive from the Khadi Board. The headquarters must have a duplicate register containing the names of all the members (serially numbered) who are expected to spin. All yarn must be labelled containing the number of yards, weight and the name and the serial number of the spinner. The Provincial organizations will have to collect sufficient cotton for distribution. Carding will have to be organized. Thus there is no time to be lost, if the returns are to be complete, as they should be, the very first month.

Lastly, those who do not know spinning at all will make no headway if they commence by spinning only half an hour daily. For the first few days, before the fingers respond, the beginner will have to work several hours per day.

Young India, 10-7-1924

193. ONE PROGRAMME

Friends have asked me to suggest one universal programme in which rajas, maharajas, No-changers, Pro-changers, Liberals, Independents, practising lawyers, Anglo-Indians and all others could join without reserve. I am asked to suggest such a programme with the condition that it must be effective and swift enough for the attainment of swaraj. The most effective and the swiftest programme I can suggest is the adoption and organization of khaddar, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, and removal by the Hindus of untouchability. It is my unalterable belief that, if these three things are achieved, we can establish swaraj without the slightest difficulty. I further believe that, if all the parties whole-heartedly work the programme, it can succeed within one year. Success of khaddar will mean boycott of foreign cloth. It is India's right and duty to manufacture all the cloth she needs. She has the means of doing it. And boycott of foreign cloth will automatically purify the English mind and remove the one insuperable obstacle in the way of Englishmen looking at things Indian from the Indian stand-point.

If, therefore, the country as a whole adopts this threefold programme, I would be prepared to advise suspension of the non-co-operation programme and civil disobedience for a period of one year. I say one year, because an honest working of the programme must bring about a virtual boycott of foreign cloth within that period.

I need hardly say that the co-operation of Swarajists alone in the above programme is not enough to suspend Non-co-operation or preparations for civil disobedience. Their assent is already there. They are pledged like all other Congressmen to the full constructive programme. Non-co-operation is necessary so long as there is no change of heart in the Government. And without that change those who keep themselves outside the Congress pale will not actively and openly participate in the programme.

I fear that the time has not yet arrived for such sincere co-operation with the people on the part of the Government or those whose position and prestige depend upon its patronage.

I know too that a very large number of people are not yet converted to the programme of unadulterated khaddar. They disbelieve in the mighty potency of the charkha. They even suspect me of evil designs upon the Indian mills. Few take the trouble of drawing a mental picture of the meaning of the message of the charkha.

I have no doubt that the country will soon come round to the charkha if its votaries are true to their faith. But some of my friends tell me that I am wrong in my diagnosis. They tell me that, if I would but drop non-co-operation and civil disobedience, everyone will gather round the charkha and that it is preposterous for me to suspect the Government of a desire to divide Hindus and Mussalmans. I hope I am wrong.

Let me make the position clear regarding our mills. I am not their enemy. I believe they have a place in our economy for some time to come. Boycott of foreign cloth cannot perhaps be brought about speedily without the assistance of mills. But if they are to help, they must become national in spirit. They must not be worked merely for the agents and shareholders but for the nation at large. In our programme, however, we must erase the mills, for khaddar has to carve out a position for itself. The message of khaddar has not even been delivered to one out of seven lakhs of villages. The mills have, therefore, more than six-sevenths of India yet at their disposal. If khaddar is to establish a permanent footing, Congressmen can only use and popularize it to the exclusion of mill-cloth. Patriotic mill-owners

must see at a glance the utility, the necessity and the reasonableness of my proposition. Indeed, they can help khaddar without hurting themselves. If the time comes when the whole of India adopts khaddar, they must rejoice with the nation and they will, even as the Lancashire mill-owners will and must some day, find other uses for their capital and machinery. I have sketched the universal programme for the satisfaction of insistent friends. But I would warn the workers against turning their attention away from the immediate task before them which is to attend to their own and their neighbours' spinning. If universal acceptance does not come now, their spinning and their faith will precipitate it. That it must come some day is a certainty. The precise date can be determined only by those who have already a living faith in it and who have proved it by acting up to it in the face of heaviest odds.

Young India, 10-7-1924

194. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Ashadh Sud 8 [July 10, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

The time passed off even as I was wondering what I could write about Abhechandbhai. The job that could be found for him would, I think, have something to do with keeping accounts or getting yarn produced. You know all about my activities; it is for you to suggest [the job for him]. What would you do if you were appointed manager for my activities (outside the Congress)? Of the articles you mention, I have received the one entitled "Simla under Swaraj". I shall inquire of Swami[2] if he has got the other.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6014. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] The article "Simla under Swaraj" mentioned in the letter was published in *Young India*, 11-9-1924. In 1924, *Ashadh Sud* 8 fell on July 10.

[2] Swami Anandanand

195. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Ashadh Sud 9 [July 11, 1924][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter as well as Bhai Shanker's. I was free from anxiety about your health. What advice can I give you now? If I were near you, I could think of some remedy; but the climate here is quite different from what it is over there. For my part I wish that you stay on at Hajira for a sufficiently long time even after the monsoon. Change of climate is the best remedy.

Meanwhile do the following: reduce pulses; leave off chutney; eat boiled vegetables; take as much as you can of oranges or fresh grapes; and drink one or two bottles of Apollinaris—a kind of [mineral] water. Whenever you are thirsty, drink only this water. Leave off medicines and, if your bowels do not move, you should take an enema even when it may not be necessary. The water should be slightly warm and half a spoon of boric acid should be added to it. If this does not give relief, one spoon of castor oil and ten drops of turpentine should be added. A little pure soap also should be dissolved in the water.

I do see that your health is deteriorating with medicines. Change of climate and enema—with these two things, however, everything will be all right.

I replied to your previous letter and postcard the very day they were received. You must have received [the reply] by now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 548. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] Earlier letters in this volume to the addressee and the instructions regarding diet, etc., in this letter suggest that it was written in 1924. In that year *Ashadh Sud* 9 fell on July 11.

196. *SPEECH AT GUJARAT CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING*[1]

AHMEDABAD,
July 11, 1924

. . . Mahatmaji, with his loin-cloth and characteristic smile on his lips, arrived at 3.15. All stood up. In addressing the meeting, Mahatmaji reminded the audience of the Fourth Gujarat Political Conference held at Ahmedabad in 1920,[2] when Non-co-operation was first proclaimed by Gujarat, before the special session of the Calcutta Congress. Mahatmaji emphasized that he was still conscious and retained the old, optimistic faith of those days, despite signs of depression, which was evinced in the country. Gujarat should always be ahead of the Congress. Mahatmaji continued:

Our representatives should undertake to spin not only half an hour as ordered by the A.I.C.C. and produce 2,000 yards, but they must spin for one hour and produce 5,000 yards instead, in order to encourage other provinces and also to set a precedent for other provinces. Let there be no harangue now, but let your spinning transmit its message of the charkha to those who are our neighbours and friends. I know there are friends who are pessimistic about the capacity of Gujarat to fulfil this programme. But let Gujarat, in whom lies my only hope—except, of course, my hope in the Almighty, which never leaves me—rise to the occasion and give the lie direct to the pessimism and distrust of these friends. If we are not concentrating on spinning even for half an hour every day, I have not the shadow of a doubt that we will not be able to attain swaraj by non-violent means. Rest assured that Councils shall not bring us swaraj. Without constructive work outside, Councils can achieve nothing. The death of constructive work would be the death-knell of swaraj.

Coming to the presidentship of the ensuing Belgaum Congress, Mahatmaji said that, fortunately or unfortunately, there had been a split in the Congress camp and people rather superstitiously believed that he was the man who would remove the split. He informed members that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

[1] A meeting of the Gujarat Congress Committee was held on July 11 at 3 p.m. The agenda included, among other things, the future programme of Gujarat, action to be taken on the A.I.C.C. resolutions and the appointment of the President of the forthcoming Congress.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XVIII, pp. 220-1.

would be landing in Bombay within a day or two and he concurred with *The Bombay Chronicle*, which had proposed Srimati Naidu's name as the President of this year's Congress.

I desire, . . . that the country should give her a befitting reception in token of the noble services she rendered in South Africa.[1] I know she is not able to satisfy everybody and, still, I propose Sarojini Devi for the highest honour in the power of the country to bestow on her, for, though a woman, she has achieved in Africa what no man could have ever achieved and also because she is an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. Dr. Ansari is another who deserves that honour, if you want a Mohammedan as your President.

But let my name stand last, if at all you necessarily want it. I am burdened with so many responsibilities that I would be glad to get rid of some of them, if I could. The weight of responsibility lies so heavy on my brow that I am afraid to invite any more of my own accord.

Opinion all round should not influence Provincial Committees in the election of the President. Although at the present moment I have [not] decided regarding this matter, I hope to do so before the final choice is made.

After the address was over, Mahatmaji asked members to put him any questions if they liked.

In reply to a question put to him, Mahatmaji replied that khaddar woven out of yarn spun by Congress representatives would strike the imagination of the public in such a way as nothing else can.

In reply to another question, he said that those who wanted to work the one programme outlined in yesterday's *Young India* should first ensure the spread of a unanimous opinion about it and, failing that, they must work it out outside the Congress organization.

The Hindu, 12-7-1924

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 407-9.

197. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Ashadh Sud 11 [July 12, 1924][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your postcard. Rain is tantalizing us by not arriving. Signs of its coming are always visible, but it does not come. From the water flowing in the river, it is evident that there has been rain higher up. Radha is still weak; Perinbehn and Nargisbehn had been here; they returned [to Bombay] with Jamnabehn. Only the lady who was superintendent at the Seva Sadan is now here. Try to stay on there as long as you can. I hope you have received my letter giving instructions.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 449. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

198. FORCE OR RESTRAINT?

A friend has raised a very difficult question. He says:

> If it is against the principle of non-violence to bring about any reforms by force, it is violence to compel anyone to give up drink by legislation.

Here is some confusion of thought. The friend seems to believe that law always connotes coercion. But this is not so. It is violence to cause suffering to others out of our selfishness or just for the sake of doing so. If, however, it becomes necessary to cause suffering to anyone in order to make someone else happy, to do so dispassionately and unselfishly can be non-violence. When I injure a thief to save myself from him (that is, for my benefit), that is violence. When a surgeon uses a knife on a patient and makes him suffer in order to bring him relief, that is non-violence. From this point of view, if a thief is arrested and put into a reformatory, not in order to harass him but to reform him, if kindness is shown to him and he is placed in a good environment so that he may become a good man—in this there is neither force nor violence but restraint exercised by society or the ruler. The ruler who does this saves the

[1] The postmark bears the date 13 July, 1924.

thief from the risk of a prosecution, which is a further kindness done to him. Similarly, there is mere violence in a law that provides for the whipping of drunkards, but to close down every liquor-booth by law and thereby to remove the temptation from the drunkard is a form of restraint and is non-violence. There is in this nothing but pure love. Likewise, if I intimidate someone to give up foreign cloth, that is force. But passing a law to stop the import of foreign cloth is restraint. There is nothing but pure love in this. However, a law to punish anyone for wearing foreign cloth would be coercion. It signifies anger on the part of society.

We thus see that all laws do not connote force. Modern laws do have an element of force in them because their makers' object is to produce fear in order to protect society from criminals; it is not to reform the criminals.

The only question which remains is this. We see reforms effected even through force. A person can be made to give up stealing by beating him. Quite a few people say and believe that many children have been reformed through beating. It is this belief which is responsible for the increasing burden of sin in the world at present. The use of force is soul-destroying and it affects not only the person who uses it but also his descendants and the environment as a whole. We should examine the total effect of the use of force, and that over a long period of time. The use of force has continued over a long period of time, but we do not find that those things against which force has been employed have been destroyed. Formerly there used to be heavy punishments for theft. It is the opinion of all expert observers that heavy punishments have not stopped thefts. As the punishments began to be tempered with mercy, the number of thefts declined.

But the strongest proof of the damage that is being done by the use of force is to be found in the fact that once the custom of effecting reforms by force gets established, the people tend to become dull and lifeless and, as the indolent and savage remedy of using force is resorted to in respect of every matter, the people lose two of their precious qualities: patience and perseverance. We may perhaps be deluded into believing that we can secure peace through the use of force, but there are innumerable instances to prove that, on the whole, only evil consequences flow from the use of force.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 13-7-1924

199. *INFANTICIDE OF GIRLS*

I have kept the following letter[1] with me for a number of days.

I have not reproduced some part of the letter which contains details. How far the evils mentioned in the letter are real—*Patidars* alone know. I am supposed to have stayed among them for a time and yet, my task being to know the good qualities, I made no attempt to acquaint myself with their defects, nor did anyone draw my attention to them.

But if the account given in the letter is true, that should put us to shame. The sinful superstition that the birth of a baby girl is inauspicious is common among us. This superstition has as its basis mere selfishness. It might well have originated in the dark ages. That people should have detested the birth of a female child in the age when virgins were being kidnapped is in some measure understandable. Today that fear is practically non-existent. Even if it were there, we are in a position to take remedial measures. If there is any reason to rejoice at a birth, we should rejoice whether it is the birth of a boy or a girl; both should be equally dear to us. The world certainly needs both. One is a complement to the other. That being so, to rejoice at the birth of one and to feel depressed at the birth of the other benefits neither. In a well-balanced society, the proportion of men and women ought to be equal.

It is common in Hindu society that the father of a girl has to bear heavy expenses on the occasion of her wedding. Perhaps this custom assumed grave proportions among the *Patidars*. There cannot be two opinions on the absolute need to do away with this expenditure. A very expensive custom only ruins poor parents and it becomes almost impossible for them to get their daughters married and consequently there arises the practice of administering poison to girls.

The example[2] the teacher of Sunav has set is worth following. In this age of khadi, weddings can certainly be celebrated with only khadi garlands.

[1] Not translated here

[2] In the marriage ceremony of a teacher of the national school at Sunav, there were only ten persons in the bridegroom's party, both the bride and the bridegroom put on khaddar garments made from yarns spun by themselves, and the wedding expenditure amounted to a hundred rupees only.

The writer has thrown the entire blame on the old folk. There must be some exaggeration in this. But if the old should remain still obstinate owing to their proud temper, youth organizations should take control. If the young would firmly decline to participate in expensive weddings, the extravagance would at once stop. For this neither discourtesy nor great effort is called for. The deplorable thing is that till today the youths have regarded such matters as outside their sphere of activity. They have never used their educational attainments for securing social reform.

But the order of things has changed now. The young have begun to think for themselves. Hence this reform can be effected without great effort. Only unshakable determination is called for.

I for one do not like even the association of twelve villages.[1] I believe in the four castes only. It is necessary to merge the sub-castes. But that will take time. Yet, to divide *Patidars* into groups of villages is the climax of caste division. Why should those who can interdine with the *Patidars* of the whole of Gujarat not intermarry with them? Mere pride, and not restraint, is responsible for the creation of this twelve-village association. Where there is false pride, there is sin. Hence wise and experienced *Patidars* should join hands to bring about the desired reform and immediately put an end to the infanticide of girls and the above-mentioned wicked practices responsible for it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 13-7-1924

200. *LETTER TO INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI*

Ashadh Sud 14 [*July 15, 1924*]

BHAI INDRA,

I have your letter. It reached me after I had already written something [on the subject]. But I wrote nothing to hurt anybody. I hope none will go to court and the matter has now calmed down.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

SHRI INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI
"ARJUN" OFFICE
DELHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4857. Courtesy: Chandragupta Vidyalankar

[1] Endogamy prevailed among the *Patidars* of only these villages.

201. LETTER TO KUNVERJI KHETSHI PAREKH

Ashadh Sud 14 [July 15, 1924][1]

CHI. KUNVERJI,

I was sorry to read about the demise of your revered maternal uncle. I know he was a great support to you. But knowing that birth and death are our inescapable companions, we should neither rejoice at the one nor mourn for the other.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

CHI. KUNVERJI KHETSHI
C/O PAREKH GOKULDAS TRIBHUVAN
MORVI

From a copy of the Gujarati original: C.W. 676. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

202. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Ashadh Sud 15 [July 16, 1924][2]

Do not worry about my health. I have increased the quantity of my food again. Who can understand my mind today? I myself do not know where it will land me. The struggle is of course going on. I do not insist on anything. I only try to make and keep myself as pure as I can. I consider that to be my only duty. God may then pour into it anything He likes. *Young India* and *Navajivan* mirror it for the most part.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 73

[1] The postmark bears the date 16 July, 1924.
[2] As in the source

203. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Ashadh Sud 15 [July 16, 1924][1]

It is impossible just now for Ba to go there[2] . . . What will she do even if she goes? I therefore do not wish to press her to go. Tell Anand[3] to excuse me.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 74

204. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Ashadh Sud 15 [July 16, 1924][4]

PU. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. Whenever you get angry, you should ask yourself, "Against whom do I have all this [wrath]? The *atman* is free from passion; with whom can it be angry?" The external remedy to control anger is to keep silent. One should speak only after one is calm again.

You should forget past things. Just as we do not eat food left by others after a meal, so also we should not remember past happenings and derive pleasure or pain from them. We are entitled to take care of the present only; we should not think about the future either.

Since you are not going to leave Borivli out of anger or malice, you may pay a visit to them if your son is very importunate. After all, you are not going to forsake either your son or daughter-in-law. You are going to make room for her, so that she may not be embarrassed and you despondent.

[1] As in the source

[2] The addressee had, at the instance of his mother, written to Gandhiji to send Kasturba Gandhi to Bombay to attend some ceremony in connection with his wife's first pregnancy.

[3] Addressee's mother

[4] From the reference to the addressee's leaving her home at Borivli for the Ashram, it is evident that the letter was written in 1924. In that year *Ashadh Sud* 15 fell on July 16.

I shall be here till, at any rate, the end of this month. Even during the first week of August, I shall be here.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6015. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

205. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Ashadh Sud 15 [*July 16, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Keep me informed about the effects of the new treatment. I may have to stay here the whole of August. I shall very much like your going to Hajira. Shall I make arrangements for you there? It will be better to go to the Punjab after October. What fruits do you get and do you eat them?

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 450. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

206. NOTE TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI[2]

[About *July 16, 1924*][3]

Even if the Congress dismisses me, I must humbly bear with it; but I cannot attack either party.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 74

[1] The postmark is dated, Sabarmati, July 17, 1924.

[2] This was written on a 'silence day' in reply to Mathuradas's letter, in which he had appealed to Gandhiji to leave the Congress because there were internal squabbles in it.

[3] As in the source

207. NOTES

Sarojini the Singer

The readers of *Young India* have shared with me several letters received by me[1] from South Africa regarding the wonderful work of India's gifted daughter. Here is one sentence for them to share from a letter from Mr. P. K. Naidu:

> Her work here was wonderful. Her charming personality and winsome eloquence won us not hundreds but thousands of European friends and also shook up the Smuts Government.

India is therefore honouring herself by honouring her. For myself I must confess that her presence is a great relief to me. For, though I believe that I can contribute my humble share in the promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, in many respects she can do much better. She intimately knows more Mussalmans than I do. She has access to their hearts, which I cannot pretend to. Add to these qualifications her sex, which is her strongest qualification in which no man can approach her. For peace-making is woman's special prerogative. Sarojini Devi has deliberately cultivated that special quality of her sex. She showed it to perfection at the time of the disgraceful rioting in Bombay in 1921. Her personal bravery and her tireless energy had become infectious. Wherever she went, the rioters laid down their arms. She has been a veritable angel of peace in East Africa and South Africa. The best welcome India can extend to her is to pray that God may give her the strength to continue her mission of peace and that she may become an indissoluble cement between the two communities. May the so-called weaker sex succeed where we, the so-called stronger sex, have failed.

God presses not pride but humility in His service. Man knows how to destroy, it is woman's prerogative to construct. May Sarojini be the instrument in God's hands for constructing real unity between Hindus and Mussalmans.

Delhi and Nagpur

Delhi has disgraced itself. The riots in Delhi would show that there is no non-co-operation left there, for non-co-operation with the Government means co-operation among the people. But in

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 407-9.

Delhi last week there was more non-co-operation with one another than with the Government. The Congress and the Khilafat men could not produce peace among the people. It was reserved for the police and the military to do so. Theirs is the glory and ours the disgrace. The letters before me tell me that our volunteers, being baffled in their attempt to bring about peace, chose the next best thing, viz., that of nursing those who were hurt, not by the police, but in an affray among themselves.

The whole affair is said to have been due to an assault alleged to have been committed by some Hindus on a Mussalman youth. What though the youth had died? The aggrieved Mussalmans could have had their remedy either through the recently appointed arbitration board or through the Government courts.

Granted that some Hindus assaulted a Muslim boy, that thereupon some Mussalmans assaulted the Hindus, why did the other Hindus, whoever they might be, retaliate? For according to the letters received by me, the fighting had spread to the whole of the Indian area. The same letters tell me that, though it had so spread, the main population was unaffected by the disturbance and that there were instances of Hindus having sheltered Mussalmans and the latter having done likewise to Hindus. All this is no doubt creditable. But the fact remains that the main population was powerless to restrain the mob. We have not yet gained control over the turbulent element.

Nagpur has fared no better. As yet only meagre details have come to hand. It is evident that the Hindus and the Mussalmans of Nagpur consider a free fight among themselves to be more profitable than a joint fight (non-violent though it must be) against the Government.

Thus, if Delhi and Nagpur are any indication of the temper of the people at large, we must say good-bye to Hindu-Muslim unity for a long while and must, therefore, be content to live as slaves rather than strive to be free.

But I do not despair. I believe with Maulana Shaukat Ali that these quarrels are a short-lived distemper and that both the communities are bound, in the near future, to settle down to a peaceful programme.

And if we are to settle down to such a programme, I would like to suggest both to the Delhi and the Nagpur Congressmen and Khilafatists that neither party goes to court on any account whatsoever, but that the disputes be settled by arbitration. The lawyers, whether practising or otherwise, can help a great deal in this direction. They can simply refuse to take cases to

court, but point out to the parties that they have nothing to gain thereby and probably much to lose. They can assure them, too, that if it is real peace they want they will not get it through courts.

Bara Bazaar Congressmen

When I read the account of disturbances ending in assault between Congressmen in Bara Bazaar, Calcutta, I was disinclined to believe it. But three letters received by me from Congressmen who were most of them eye-witnesses show that there was a free fight at the meeting and all this for the sake, not of attaining the object of the Congress, but for the sake of capturing the committee. All the three letters are from professed No-changers. The letters do not enable one to fix the guilt on any one party. I have no doubt that a Swarajist account would entirely blame the No-changers. What puzzles me is that any party should resort to violence for the sake of capturing an organization which is claimed to be non-violent. The writers of the letters say that they are 'my followers'. If, by calling themselves 'my followers', they claim to be votaries of non-violence, they must avoid every occasion for conflict. They must, therefore, cease to take part in an armed fight for capturing the Congress or any of its committees. My correspondents tell me that, although No-changers are in a decided majority in Bara Bazaar, the Swarajists are likely to pack their meetings or break up No-changers' meetings and thus control the Congress organization. Supposing that all these charges are true, surely the No-changers have a non-violent remedy open to them. They must simply cease to attend Swarajist meetings and form their own organization for working their programme, if it is the programme they want to work and not the Congress they want to capture. I promise that the No-changers will, if they work, make themselves indispensable to the Swarajists. There is but one God, one goal, one means. There is unity in disease, therefore, there is unity in remedy. Whether it is the Government or the Swarajists, there is only one sovereign remedy, namely, non-violent non-co-operation. 'My followers' will, therefore, do well to set up their own organization of work and no talk. They must cut their way to the nation's heart through service. I have addressed my argument to the No-changers because they are the protesting party and they write as 'my followers'. I neither believe nor disbelieve their charges against Swarajists. I claim the latter too to be 'my followers' since they claim equally with the No-changers to be the votaries of the Congress creed. If

they assert, as I have no doubt they will assert, that they were not in the wrong, I would suggest to them the same remedy as I have to the 'No-change followers' of mine. 'My followers' wait for no response from the opposite party, for they do not retaliate. Those that do not, expect no return. They are, therefore, never hurt. To put it in the most concrete manner possible, no one who wants to spin, or do what lies in him to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, or, if a Hindu, to remove untouchability, requires any organization. Organizations may want him and he will gladly give his service wherever he is wanted. A Swarajist friend tells me that in Maharashtra No-changers have and retain their majority purely through brute force and that in Berar it was they who resorted to blows. If that be so, I would ask the No-changers to apologize and, wherever they are holding office through brute force or unclean methods, to vacate office and yet do their task. It is a gross superstition to believe that one cannot serve effectively without the Congress prestige at one's back.

A Step in Advance

The Gujarat P.C.C., while endorsing the A.I.C.C. resolution on spinning, has advanced upon the original and has made 3,000 yards of yarn obligatory for the first month and contemplates making 5,000 yards obligatory in the near future. It has also prescribed the penalty clause that was dropped by the A.I.C.C. I have always held that it is open to every provincial committee to advance upon the A.I.C.C. requirements. Every province having the capacity should regard it as its duty to do so. 2,000 yards is in the nature of subscription payable by every representative. It is meritorious to give more. And there is nothing wrong in disqualifying a member who does not pay his subscription. I hope, therefore, that the other provinces which can will follow the example of Gujarat. The 15th of August will give the country a clear indication of where Congress representatives stand regarding their faith in spinning. Let them remember that 'faith without works' is like a body without soul—a corpse fit only to be burnt or buried.

The burden of organizing spinning in every province rests with the provincial committees. They should lose no time in ascertaining the names of representatives and seeing that they do not neglect their duty for want of material or knowledge. Our helplessness is pitiable; we can be saved from impending ruin only if we become what we were, a nation of spinners and weavers. The Congress has, on paper at least, accepted the truth of the

proposition. Its representatives throughout the country are now expected to become skilled carders and spinners, learn all about the science of spinning and organize their respective districts.

Half-hour's labour is the preliminary. But the preliminary process requires attention to details, stocking and supplying cotton, carding and turning it into slivers and spinning it. The yarn collected would have to be examined at the provincial centre. The wheels would need attention. A proper wheel with a proper spindle will naturally cause a great saving of time and would give pleasure to the spinner.

The duty of spinning by a Congress representative arises from the A.I.C.C. resolution. But as a matter of fact, it is a duty incumbent upon everyone, whether Congressman or other. Every enthusiastic worker may form a spinning club whose business will be to get as much yarn as possible spun by every one of its members for presentation to the Secretary, Khadi Board. The reader will be glad to know that the Registrar of the Gujarat Vidyapith has already set the ball rolling by getting the staff of office to promise to spin five thousand yards per month, of which two thousand yards are to be presented to the Vidyapith and the rest to be preserved.

A Danger

Gujarat has been in the habit of absorbing khadi to a very large extent from Andhra, Punjab and Bihar. Whilst it was perhaps necessary to do so in the initial stages when Gujarat could produce practically no khadi for her requirements and the provinces named needed encouragement, as a system it is vicious. The central fact of khaddar is to make every village self-supporting for its food and clothing. Therefore, every province must become self-supporting. It cannot become so if it has to import khadi from another. For one thing such a province has no staying power against famine. The exporting province must suffer too. Abuse must creep in both production and sale and there will be the greatest temptation to use mill-spun instead of hand-spun yarn. I have a letter before me from Masulipatam in which the writer says that habit is growing up among dealers of stocking hand-spun yarn and getting it woven for export. The writer further adds that the spinners, instead of themselves wearing hand-spun, almost invariably wear mill-spun. It is, therefore, highly necessary for workers to guard against such trafficking in khaddar. The way to induce those spinners to wear homespun is to weave for them free of charge. Yard for yard mill-spun is likely,

for some time, to sell cheaper than homespun. The poor spinners who spin merely for their living will not listen to patriotic argument or that of national economy. The only argument they will listen to would be that of their pockets. And if they can have their own yarn woven for them free of charge, they will gladly wear khaddar. For such work to be done thoroughly and cheaply, it is necessary for many young men not merely to learn spinning but also weaving so that they may weave for the sake of their poor sisters. All these things cannot happen unless the Congress becomes chiefly a khaddar-propaganda organization.

But the foregoing argument does not mean that there will be no export of khadi. The special talent of Andhra will always be in demand. But this interchange must be left to private enterprise. The Congress can concern itself only with the things that need tender nursing.

Add the 'Gag'

An English friend writes:

> Only a week ago I wrote to a friend and said 'Gandhi forgot when he recommended *rentia* to add *bookani* or gag.' You may remember my lecture when I said the abuse of leisure or spare time was the curse of India and recommended hobbies, i.e., gardening, carpentry, photography, reading history, philosophy, etc. It is foolish, vapid talk which engrosses all the spare time of the people of this country. They have not learnt to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. The remedy is continual essay-writing in schools and colleges on every kind of subject which will necessitate the study of books and the mastery of their contents, the formulation of ideas and their logical arrangement.

I have no hesitation in endorsing the friend's suggestion as to gagging. There is no doubt that we are suffering from a surfeit of talking and writing. Much of both is inane when it does not contain abuse of the Government or one's opponent. I have suggested that talking may well be left to Maulana Shaukat Ali and me. As for writing, I am doing it already. We need not discount the friend's criticism because he is an Englishman. He also happens to be a 'criminal'. He takes part in running the machinery which we are seeking to destroy. But as I have no ill-will against these English 'criminals' who find themselves running the machinery, some of them retain their friendship with me in spite of my opposition (mad as it appears to some of them to be) to the system they are administering. I would, therefore, ask the reader to give due weight to the friend's criticism. Essay-writing is good

only to a certain extent. It does not make a writer necessarily brief unless he practises the art of condensation. Everyone who wishes may try to boil down all his thoughts and compress them so as to take up no more than one side of half a sheet of note paper.

Gokhale was once asked by Morley to perform a similar feat. He did it. It took him more time than if he had to write 50 sheets which nobody would read. Shankara delivered the whole of his celebrated message in half a verse: 'God alone is; all else is not.' The real discipline, however, lies in curbing the desire to speak or write. One would then speak or write only when one must.

But, as a matter of fact, spinning carries its own gag. When spinning grows on a man or woman, he or she has little leisure for anything else. And whilst the English friend, not feeling as we do, not knowing the condition of the masses as we do, can only speak of spinning as one of the many hobbies for occupying idle hours, we think of spinning as a sacred duty for the age and the country we are living in. It, therefore, derives from that fact a value all its own and cannot be spoken of in the same breath as the other occupations. When Englishmen have realized this fact, they will no longer be strangers in a strange land for its exploitation. They, too, will then spin not for amusement or curiosity, but as a duty they owe to the country whose salt they eat. But before we can expect them to do so, we must prove our faith by our work.

A Popular Bazaar

The people of Champaran are amongst the most timid in India. They have only lately been trying to stand erect. It is not an uncommon thing even now to see respectable people insulted or assaulted in Champaran by petty officials. Babu Rajendra Prasad has sent me a brief note relating the incidents that have led to the establishment of a people's bazaar in Bettiah and the desertion of the one established by the Raj. I do not propose to go into the persecution the people have suffered in the matter. There is, however, one incident which I dare not ignore. It is reported that some people, instigated by the authorities, are spreading rumours to the effect that I am averse to the establishment of popular markets. I have no hesitation in repudiating the suggestion. Indeed, I knew nothing about the existence of the market till now. But I would any day welcome such popular enterprises. I hope, therefore, that the people of Bettiah will persist

in their enterprise in the teeth of all opposition and inconvenience. They must not succumb to temptations or threats.

Pauper Orissa

Whenever I think of the pauperism of India, the living skeletons I saw under the very shadow of Jagannath rise before my eye and seem to rebuke me for the life of comparative ease I am leading in spite of my vaunted vow of poverty. The striking address of Acharya Ray[1] before the Utkal Conference has renewed the uncomfortable memories of the pictures I witnessed in Orissa during my visit there. Dr. Ray had cited some terrible figures to demonstrate the poverty of the people. He says that the death-rate in Bihar and Orissa is 35 and birth-rate is 19.4. The net deficit in both is, therefore, 15.6 per thousand. *For Orissa alone* the figures are worse, being 31 per thousand. Let the reader imagine what these figures mean. The people of Orissa are dying away at the rate of 31 per thousand every year. If the things remain as they are, the net loss must progressively increase every year. Orissa is a land of chronic famines. The people have no other occupation save agriculture. It is facts such as these that have converted Dr. Ray to the message of the charkha.

Resignations

One hears of resignations from Congress representatives in virtue of the third resolution of the A.I.C.C. I regard it a healthy sign if the resigning members have done so in a sporting spirit and if it does not mean their ceasing to do Congress work. The country can ill-afford to lose any the least service of any worker. Only, it must be in accordance with its terms and requirements. The workers in every province will, therefore, have to keep their heads cool and work without any friction. Reconstruction of committees will tax the best effort of workers wherever there are many resignations. Provincial committees are unwieldy in many provinces. There is almost complete self-government in the provinces. They may, therefore, frame rules and make the committees much smaller than they are. They must be useful rather than ornamental and efficient rather than bulky.

Young India, 17-7-1924

[1] Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944); professor of chemistry at Presidency College, Calcutta; author of *History of Hindu Chemistry*; educationist and patriot

208. 'AN APPEAL TO THE NATION'

Under the above heading Mr. Srish Chandra Chatterji and eighteen other signatories have issued a document which I copy below:

> We are passing through a series of national crises the gravity of which can hardly be exaggerated. There are moments in the history of nations when a decisive move in the right direction often leads a nation to a triumphant goal and, when that supreme moment is lost in vague imagination or false and indecisive steps, it takes long centuries to retrieve the loss. India is passing through some such crisis and we are extremely fortunate that the crisis is not yet over. The whole world is shivering from the pains of labour, the indications of a new life are manifest everywhere, and a regenerated India must find a place among the new-born nations of the world. This rejuvenated India cannot accept any overlord, she must be a free and independent nation.
>
> At a time when all the nations of the world are fighting for independence and liberty, at a time when our Indian heroes are championing the cause of India's independence abroad, it is simply ridiculous and shameful that we Indians should hesitate to accept independence as our only legitimate and logical goal; we therefore appeal to our nation to declare in the open Congress in unmistakable terms that independence and complete independence is our destined goal; let there be no ambiguous phrases to qualify it, let it be preached in all its nakedness. It is the moral force of this ideal that creates nations.
>
> We must educate the country from this very moment in a way so that the people may realize the significance of a republic and a federation. We may postpone it for the future only at the risk of a great national calamity. We therefore appeal to the Congress delegates to define swaraj as a Federated Republic of the United States of India.
>
> We also appeal to the delegates of this Congress to delete the words 'by peaceful and legitimate means' from the Congress creed, so that men holding every shade of opinion may have no difficulty in joining the only national organization in the country, though for the present it may be retained as a part of the actual programme of Congress work. Our time is short and we cannot dilate upon this point at any length, but we only say that means are after all means and our object and means should not be confounded with each other.
>
> We are further of opinion that mere changing of the creed and passing of resolutions would not bring us independence. We therefore request

the representatives of our nation to engage the whole strength and the whole resources of the Congress in organizing a band of national workers who will devote all their time and all their energy in the service of their motherland and who must be ready to suffer and even be ready to sacrifice their lives for the national cause. When the Congress is backed by an organization of this kind then and then alone will the Congress have any strength and only then can we expect the voice of the Congress to be respected.

The other items in our programme should be:

(1) Boycott of British goods
(2) Establishment or helping in the establishment of factories and cottage industries on a strictly co-operative basis.
(3) Helping the labourers and peasants of our land in obtaining their grievances redressed and organizing them for their own economic good and moral prosperity.
(4) And finally to organize a federation of all the Asiatic races in the immediate future.

I know that this 'appeal to the nation' has been before the public for some time. It contains nothing new. Nevertheless it represents the views not merely of the signatories but of a large number of educated Indians. It will not, therefore, be a waste of energy to examine the contents.

Whereas the Congress leaves swaraj undefined, the signatories would have complete independence and, therefore, define swaraj as a Federated Republic of the United States of India. There is nothing in the Congress creed to prevent India aspiring after independence. In fact, swaraj that does not enable India to declare her independence if necessary is no swaraj. What, however, the independence of the signatories means is severance at any cost and in every case with England. I hold that such severance is not indispensable for India's growth and freedom. The burden of severance should lie with the English people. It is more dignified for us to declare our readiness to be partners on equal terms and at will with the English in a Federation of Free States. Acceptance of such a position on the part of Englishmen may be impossible, but we have no right to assume the impossibility of a thing which, in its nature, is not impossible. Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States. It is voluntary interdependence. England is by no means so independent as to absorb any European State she chooses. Her independence depends partly upon the goodwill of her neighbours and partly upon her armament. In so far as she relies upon her armament, she is a menace to the world, as in fact she became

during the late War. She stood, as we now learn, not for righteousness but for plunder. Her statesmen, equally with France and other States, were guilty of secret treaties, diplomatic fraud and barbarities hardly inferior to Germany's. It must be clear to everyone that it cannot be such armed independence that the signatories want and, if they do, I am certain that they represent only themselves. Independence is a word hallowed by centuries of usage and, therefore, it is possible to raise round it a large body of opinion, but no one would hazard a definition of it that would suit the whole of that body. I suggest, therefore, that there is no substitute for swaraj, and the only universal definition to give it is 'that status of India which her people desire at a given moment.'

If I were asked what India desires at the present moment, I should say I do not know. I could only say I would have her to desire truthful relations between Hindus and Mussalmans, bread for the masses and removal of untouchability. That is how I would define swaraj at the present moment. I give that definition because I claim to be a practical man. I know that we want political independence of England. It will not be attained without the three things mentioned by me, not even if we had arms and we knew how to use them.

The second thing the signatories desire is the removal of the clause restricting the means to what is 'peaceful and legitimate'. I share the signatories' opinion, not for the reasons they give, but for the very reverse of them. They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. Violent means will give violent swaraj. That would be a menace to the world and to India herself. France obtained her freedom by violent means. She is still paying dearly for her violence. She will presently be at the mercy of her savage African army. I am a staunch believer in absolute equality between man and man, but my belief does not take me to the length that the French have gone. Their training of levies of Africans is not proof of her acceptance of the doctrine of equality but of her greed for absolute power. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed, the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. Holding such a belief, I have been endeavouring to keep the country to means that are purely 'peaceful and legitimate'.

But experience has taught me that the purpose has not perhaps been served by the restriction of the means. For I see that

those who do not believe in the necessity of non-violence and truth for the attainment of swaraj have also joined the Congress, for they regard it to be quite the proper thing to sign the Congress creed, although they do not themselves believe in it. Perhaps, they do not interpret 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' as respectively to mean 'non-violent' and 'truthful'. I would myself, therefore, probably propose the deletion of the clause 'by peaceful and legitimate means'. It would be a faithful representation of the present state of things. We would then not be open to the charge of camouflage. Everyone will be free to follow the policy he likes best.

The last paragraph of the 'appeal' reads extremely well, but it shows the utter inexperience of the signatories about practical work. It does not appear to have occurred to them that, if we have not yet got a 'band of national workers who will devote all their time and energy', it is not because the Congress has not tried, but because the Congress has failed to get a large number of such workers. Surely it is open to the signatories themselves to raise such a band if it exists. They will find funds enough for the proper stamp of workers. If the signatories will examine the different institutions of India, they will find that not one languishes for want of funds. Is it not clear that a nation always pays for organizations it needs? Only last week I drew attention to the fact that the Khadi Board cannot get the workers it wants.

The other items of the programme suggested by the signatories do not call for any lengthy notice.

I hope I have shown in a previous article[1] that boycott of British goods is a totally impracticable proposition.

The proposal for the establishment of factories has a strong Western flavour about it and ignores Indian conditions.

The one cottage industry that is possible finds no mention in the programme.

The proposal to help the labourers and peasants is a counsel of perfection.

And the final proposal to organize a federation of all the Asiatic races in the immediate future demonstrates the present impossibility of the programme.

I, therefore, respectfully suggest to the nineteen signatories to divide all the items suggested by them among themselves, each batch to specialize in connection with the item taken up by it and, when success is shown in any one of the departments, to come

[1] *Vide* "Empire Goods Boycott", 15-5-1924.

to the Congress for national adoption. But if they have made the proposals without any idea of carrying them out themselves, I ask them to accept the opinion I have tendered and apply themselves to the working of khaddar—a programme that can harness the energy of all who will work.

Young India, 17-7-1924

209. *WHO SHALL BE PRESIDENT?*

Ever since my name has been put forward as one of the candidates for the presidential honour at the forthcoming Congress at Belgaum, I have been torn between two opinions. My first thought was immediately to discountenance the idea of my nomination. But I did allow myself also to think that, in the face of the stormy weather that the national barque is experiencing, probably I was the best person to direct it safely to its haven. But I now see quite clearly that my second thought was wrong. As I picture for myself the whole of the forthcoming proceedings, I quail. The thought of officially conducting the executive for the ensuing year baffles me. Being uncertain as to the direction in which the country is going, I feel I am unfit to be at the helm. I have no other programme but that of the charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity and untouchability. I should be utterly unfit to carry out any other programme, that, for instance, of boycott of British goods or energizing the masses on the proceedings in the Councils. These are but samples of many possibilities. And if I cannot help, I must not hinder from within. It is contrary to my nature to be responsible for a programme in which I cannot or do not believe. Moreover, I must hold myself free for emergencies. If the Congress representatives do not carry out the simple duty of spinning for half an hour daily and taking the trouble of sending 2,000 yards of good yarn of their own spinning from month to month, I should not know where my usefulness to the Congress could be. My presidential address must be a thesis on hand-spinning, complete surrender by Hindus of their material ambition to the Mussalmans and other minorities, and on further asking Hindus to regard untouchability as a sin. If these things cannot enthuse the nation, I should be a useless President. How would it do for the Congress to have as President a man who sketched a programme of putting the whole nation in pantaloons? We would at once vote against him however sincere he might be in his professions and

however able in the execution of his design. We would not have him because he would not suit us. So may the case be with me.

I must not, therefore, allow myself to be elected. I appreciate the affection of those who have put forth my name. But I ask them to appreciate my position, sympathize with me and withdraw my name.

There are two possible names, Sarojini Naidu and Dr. Ansari. When I mentioned Dr. Ansari's name, a friend said he would be the fourth Mussalman President within four years. That for me is no bar. Let the Hindus demonstrate their intense desire for Hindu-Muslim unity by having a Mussalman as President. Dr. Ansari is one of the few impartial leaders we have in both the communities. From the Hindu-Muslim stand-point alone, therefore, Dr. Ansari may be the best selection.

But I must confess that, at the present juncture, I would give my vote to Sarojini. She stands for solid Hindu-Muslim unity. Mussalmans do not distrust her. We have not yet had an Indian woman as our President. This is the fittest opportunity for paying our Indian sisters the compliment that is long overdue. Her services in East and South Africa are still fresh in our memory. We cannot reward them better than by selecting her as our President for the coming session. It will strengthen the cause of our countrymen overseas. They will realize in a special manner that we are not unmindful of their interests. Her election will be a graceful acknowledgment of the courtesy and sympathy extended to our fair ambassador by hundreds of Europeans in both the sub-continents and to the opponents among them. It would be an indication of our determination to make our own the cause of our countrymen abroad. Lastly, we want an impartial President this year. I am frankly a partisan in the sense that I am an out-and-out advocate of the old programme. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has, fortunately for her and the nation, no such unalterable views and, what is more, no one will identify her with any programme as I rightly must be with the programme I may advocate. I, therefore, respectfully ask the Provincial Committees to withdraw my name and elect Sarojini Devi as President, unless for the reason mentioned, they would rather have a Mussalman to preside and would, therefore, elect Dr. Ansari.

Young India, 17-7-1924

210. *"VARNASHRAMA" OR "VARNASANKARA"?*

A fair friend writes:

> A fellow traveller drew my attention to the message[1] of yours to the Rajput Parishad of Vartej. By reading it a protest which was lying suppressed in the subconscious level of the mind made its way to the surface and claimed a hearing. Man is one who does *manan* or thinking. So I hope you will be tolerant to a fellow thinker and give an attentive hearing to thoughts that may run counter to your habitual ones. These thoughts had occurred at the first sight of the Sabarmati Ashram with its weaving shed in 1920, had disappeared and reappeared off and on, till of late they have been busy building a permanent abode in my mind for which your message to the Rajputs has supplied the straw for the last brick.
>
> In a place where the whole station was lined from one end to the other with volunteers dressed in military style with swords hanging at their sides, where the whole air was redolent with reminiscences of bravery and chivalry of men of the military caste of India, was not your message urging them in a way to substitute the music of your wheel for the music of their sword a preaching of the dharma of your caste to all castes *ad absurdum*, like the Christian missionary? Should you not rather, like the sages of ancient India, exhort a Brahmin to be a true Brahmin, a Kshatriya to be an ideal Kshatriya and a Vaisya to be a model Vaisya? The insignia of the Brahmin is the book or pen, of the Kshatriya the sword, and of the Vaisya the wheel or the plough. You may well pride yourself in being called a weaver or an agriculturist as thereby you are true to the natural tendencies of your *jati* or to Vaisya dharma. But why would you a Hindu, a believer in *varnashrama* principles, help in the degradation of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya by insisting on their accepting Vaisya dharma and rejecting or neglecting their respective *jati* dharmas? Can a Kshatriya not serve and protect the poor even in these days but in the Vaisya way?
>
> The great men of India have always upheld *swadharma* for each individual temperament. You are the first of them to preach the throwing in of the dharmas of all people into the same melting pot and thereby Vaisyaising the whole nation. Uplift the Vaisya by all means, but pray do not pull the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas by their legs. Spiritualize your caste people, but do not materialize the men of other castes by turn-

[1] *Vide* pp. 223-4.

> ing them into spinners and weavers with the spell of your personality. To my thinking a Vinoba and a Balkoba would have rendered more potent service to the nation as pure Brahmins with their intellects fully developed rather than as spiritual weavers which you have turned them into.

I have not reproduced the whole of the letter but I have given the cream of it. The rest is a commentary on the extract quoted by me. The friend is born and claims to be a Hindu even as I claim to be one. As I have regarded spinning to be superior to sectional religions, I had hoped that I would not be misunderstood by cultured friends. But it was not to be. The friend tells me she is not the only one to oppose the charkha. I must, therefore, endeavour patiently to examine the argument. I have noted in the course of my journalistic experience dating from 1904 that most of the criticism received by editors is based upon an imperfect understanding of an opponent's statement. In the case in point, if only the friend had borne in mind that I had presented the message of the wheel, not to the Hindus alone, but to all Indians without exception, to men and women, to Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, Jews, Sikhs and all others who claimed to be Indians, she would have written differently. She would then have inferred that I had placed before the people of India something which not only did not come in conflict with the several religions but which, in so far as it was taken up, added lustre to one's own religion and, in Hinduism, to one's own *varna* or caste. Mine, therefore, I claim to be a method not of confusion but cleansing. I ask no one to forsake his own hereditary dharma or occupation, but I ask everyone to add spinning to his natural occupation. The Rajputs of Kathiawar knew this. They asked me whether I wanted them to give up their swords. I told them I wanted them to do no such thing. On the contrary, I added, I wanted each one of them to possess a trusty sword so long as they believed in it. But I certainly told them that my ideal Rajput was he who defended without the sword and who died at his post without killing. A sword may be snatched from one, not so the bravery to die without striking. But this is by the way. For my purpose, it is enough to show that the Rajputs were not to give up their calling of protecting the weak. Nor do I want the Brahmins to give up their vocation as teachers. I have suggested to them that they become better teachers for sacrificial spinning. Vinoba and Balkoba are better Brahmins for having become spinners and weavers and scavengers. Their knowledge is more digested. A Brahmin is one who knows God. Both these fellow-workers are nearer God today by reason of their having felt for and identified themselves through spinning

with the starving millions of India. Divine knowledge is not borrowed from books. It has to be realized in oneself. Books are at best an aid, often even a hindrance. A learned Brahmin had to learn divine wisdom from a godfearing butcher.

What is this *varanashrama*? It is not a system of water-tight compartments. It is a recognition to me of a scientific fact whether we know it or not. A Brahmin is not only a teacher. He is only predominantly that. But a Brahmin who refuses to labour will be voted down as an idiot. The *rishis* of old who lived in the forests cut and fetched wood, tended cattle and even fought. But their pursuit in life was pre-eminently search after Truth. Similarly, a Rajput without learning was good for nothing, no matter how well he wielded the sword. And a Vaisya without divine knowledge sufficient for his own growth will be a veritable monster eating into the vitals of society, as many modern Vaisyas, whether of the East or the West, have become. They are, according to the *Gita* 'incarnations of sin who live only for themselves'. The spinning-wheel is designed to wake up everyone to a sense of his duty. It enables everyone better to fulfil his dharma or duty. When a vessel is running on smooth waters, work on board is exquisitely divided. But when it is caught in the grip of a violent storm and is about to sink, everyone has to give a helping hand to the necessary work of life-saving.

Let us also bear in mind that, with the rest of the world, India finds herself in the deadly coil of the mercantile cobra. It is a nation of shop-keeping soldiers that claims to rule her. It will tax all the resources of all her best Brahmins to unwind India from that coil. Her learned men and her soldiers will, therefore, have to bring their learning and their prowess to bear upon the mercantile requirements of India. They must, therefore, in order to be able faithfully to carry out their dharma, learn and practise spinning.

Nor have I the least hesitation in recommending hand-weaving as a bread-winning occupation to all who are in need of an honest occupation. To the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and others, who are at the present moment not following their hereditary occupation, but are engaged in the mad rush for riches, I present the honest and (for them) selfless toil of the weaver and invite them, with a view to returning to their respective dharmas, to be satisfied with what little the handloom yields to them. Just as eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., are common to all castes and all religions, so must spinning be common to all without exception whilst the confusion, selfish greed and resulting pauperism persist. Mine, therefore, is a

method not of making *varnasankara*—confusion worse confounded—but it is one of making *varnashrama*—cleansing more secure.

Young India, 17-7-1924

211. *WHAT KHADDAR CAN DO*

A correspondent from the Andhra district writes:

> When I discontinued my studies from the Presidency College, Madras, in January 1921, I did so because I could not resist the appeal made by you. Then I knew nothing about the greatness of khaddar. After I had come from Madras to my village, I had to work hard for four months to get me two khaddar dhotis and khaddar cloth enough for three shirts. Such was the situation then, and having left the College, I did not know what to do. Fortunately, in May 1921, my uncle gave me wood for twenty charkhas, some cotton and twenty rupees to do khaddar business. With the help of a carpenter, I made charkhas out of the wood and distributed about four of them to the *Panchamas*. With these five charkhas I began the work, and now the spinning-wheels working under my supervision are about four hundred. Till two months ago, the process of my khaddar business was buying cotton, getting it done into slivers by *pinjarees*, distributing the slivers to spinners and, after they spin the yarn, getting the yarn done into cloth by weavers. To the spinners and the weavers I was giving wages for their work. I had to do thus all these days and whenever I did not or could not get cotton, the spinners and weavers had to suffer and so they had always to depend upon me or someone like me. After struggling these three years in khaddar business, I along with Mr. Ponniah, who is doing the same business at Nagalapuram in Kurnool District, had to think out some other scheme of doing khaddar business by which the spinners and weavers would not suffer for want of helpers (khaddar workers) like us. We, after three years' experience, found from the village people how thirty or forty years ago the spinners used to preserve their own cotton, make it into yarn, sell yarn made into warps of 15 cubits and 5 *panjams* (each *punjam* consists of sixty threads) at the rate of eight warps per rupee, and how the weavers used to buy yarn from them, make it into cloth and sell the cloth to buyers. This done, the spinners do not suffer for want of mediators like us and, if there could be people to buy all the cloth that the weavers make, there would be no difficulty at all. For two months Mr. Ponniah at Nagalapuram and myself here are trying to bring this process into working order and to the great relief of us and the people, we have almost succeeded.

The writer gives further details of his interesting work into which I need not go. There is sufficient in the foregoing to show what a silent revolution khaddar is working in the economic life of the nation.

Here are a few extracts from a report from the Bijapur district.

> From Bilgi we went to Badgi. We had come to this village in February 1923. Then there were only 10 or 15 charkhas working and no looms. The villagers have been quick in seeing the benefits of khadi. Now there are nearly 90 charkhas working. Being tired of the inconveniences of getting khadi woven by outside weavers, they have got a weaver from Nagral. He has started 2 looms at Badgi and will start 2 more within the next fortnight. One or two of the villagers are learning weaving at the Nagral weaver's. The villagers are not in a mood to sell their yarn. They have *determined to get it woven for their own use and will sell only the surplus.* We arranged a spinning competition among the village spinners. Twenty charkhas were merrily running for more than an hour. The yarn spun was uniform and ranged from 15 to 20 counts. We gave prizes to some 10 ladies as a token of our happiness. So long there were no spinners among the *Mahars* there. At our exhortation a *Mahar* woman showed her readiness to spin. She brought her broken wheel to the Congress Committee which will forthwith repair the charkha and supply slivers and a spindle to the enthusiastic spinner. I hope Badgi will be a model village in respect of khadi. Much depends on the local workers. . . .
>
> From Gani I proceeded to Bidri. This village has been foremost in spinning work ever since the beginning. The yarn is fine and also spun in great quantities. I visited nearly 50 houses and every house had got 2 to 4 charkhas, i.e., as many as there are adult ladies in the house. One old woman said that she had been maintaining herself on spinning for the last two years. There *are nearly 250 charkhas working*. They store their own cotton and sell the yarn. Khadi producers from Bijapur, Jamakhandi, etc., purchase the yarn from this place. The local khadi worker supported by the Congress committee has been asked to prepare dhotis for the Congress Committee. There is great promise of work in the village and also in three or four villages round this place. . . .
>
> From Bidri I went to Devargannur on the 19th. We had visited this place in February 1923. There were only 10 charkhas working then. Now at least 100 charkhas are working and the families are getting their yarn woven into cloth for themselves. The surplus yarn, if any, will be sold to the local Congress khadi workers. We arranged a spinning competition here. It was a happy sight to see 25 village ladies, young and old, rich and poor, spinning their hardest for one whole hour. We gave prizes to the ladies. A khadi worker disheartened by the lull in the cities should go

to such villages to see such competitions to get hope and strength for his work.

These are examples of paid labour. When, in terms of the A.I.C.C. resolution, the chosen representatives of the Congress and others begin to spin as part of national duty, there will be no lull in the cities either. The latter will be, as they ought to be, an extension of the village life, and not as they now are — almost foreign growths blighting and sapping the healthy life of the villagers.

Young India, 17-7-1924

212. A PLEA FOR MILLS

A correspondent writes:

According to you charkha and spinning-wheel are the best means of winning swaraj. It is impossible to dispute your noble intentions or self-sacrifice, but it is not understood why you fail to realize that, by insisting on the wholesale adoption of khaddar, you will be putting a large number of mill-owners and a considerably larger number of shareholders to terrible loss and distress, for, whereas the former have expended huge sums of money on mills, the latter—of whom there are very many of even below passable competence—have sunk their all in mill shares in the earnest hope of eking out a comfortable living with the decent dividends they would realize, having been emboldened by the prosperity of the mills. Thus, while you hope to bring prosperity to a very large number of lower orders who know no respectability and can in any way make both ends meet, you will doubtless be bringing ruin to an equally large or at least a very considerable number of high- and middle-class men.

2. As a great mahatma imbued with the most disinterested and sympathetic feelings towards mankind at large, it behoves you to hold the scales even and to exercise your best intellect in striking a middle course so as, on the one hand, to encourage charkha and spinning-wheel to a reasonable extent and, on the other, to help the mill-owners and the huge body of shareholders.

3. By all means boycott foreign cloth, but allow the optional use of mill-cloth and khaddar. You will thereby be helping many a high- and middle-class man.

This is a pathetic letter. I wish the correspondent's fears were realized. Then he will discover that the impending ruin of mills and shareholders of mills would be the time of their own and India's salvation. He will discover then that India will be pul-

sating with a new life and the middle class will be drawing their sustenance—not as now from a starving peasantry, but from prosperous farmers who would gladly exchange their produce for things they need but cannot themselves manufacture. A little reflection will enable the correspondent to realize that he and the rest of the shareholders as well as directors of mills will have to co-operate with the people before the spinning-wheel is so well established as to oust the mills. Let the correspondent derive consolation from the fact that the spinning-wheel has to displace nearly sixty crores worth of foreign cloth before it can touch the Indian mill-cloth. But for reasons I have stated in these pages, every one of us must simply think of khaddar to the exclusion of even Indian mill-cloth. Our mills need no patronage from anyone else. They have their own agencies and peculiar methods of advertising their wares. For those who are within the Congress beat to have the option of using mill-spun is to kill the khaddar industry. Khaddar needs all the protection that can be given to it before it can produce an impression upon the market.

So much for the consolation of the correspondent or those who think like him. May I, however, remind him that, if the letter were not written in ignorant fear of consequences to the mills and the middle class, it would be considered a heartless performance? What does the correspondent mean when he refers to "lower orders who know no respectability and can in any way make both ends meet?" Is he sure that "lower orders know no respectability?" Have they no feelings, are they not injured by an angry word? In what sense are they lower except in their poverty, for which we, the middle class, are responsible? And may I inform the correspondent that the "lower orders" not only do not "make the two ends meet", but the majority of them are living in a state of semi-starvation? If the middle-class people voluntarily suffer losses for the sake of the "lower classes", it would be but tardy reparation for their participation in their exploitation. It is this arrogation of superiority and consequent callousness to the sufferings of the so-called lower classes that keeps us from swaraj and that retards the progress of the life-giving charkha. I invite the correspondent to think in terms of the masses and, by taking to the charkha, identify himself with his less fortunate coutrymen.

Lastly, let the correspondent remember that, if I may be advised on the ground of my broad humanity to be tender to our mills at the expense of the "lower classes", I must also be urged, as I have been by other friends, to be tender to foreign mills for the same reasons. But if it is true, as it is true, that foreign mills

have destroyed the prosperity of the masses, the consideration of humanity demands that the masses should be taught to revert to the charkha even though foreign mill-owners may suffer. Even so must indigenous mills suffer, if need be, for the sake of those on whose poverty their fortunes are built. If an enterprising baker puts up cheap bakeries in our villages so as to replace household kitchens, the whole nation, I hope, will rise against such an enterprise. The reason for the opposition would be the same as the reason for my opposition to the mills *when they come in conflict with the interest of the masses.*

Young India, 17-7-1924

213. DEPRIVED OF HIS RIGHT

Mr. Jamaluddin Mukhmoor writes:

> At the last municipal election held in the month of November 1923, the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Merwara, who acted as the Polling Officer, most autocratically rejected my name from the Beawar municipal electoral roll on the ground of my conviction under section 108 Criminal Procedure Code for the period of 6 months. He passed the order in the month of October 1923 and, since it was appealable, I appealed to the Commissioner on the 10th October. For one month complete silence was assumed. In the meantime, 26th of November was fixed for recording the votes. Consequently, on the 20th November, I sent a reminder to the Commissioner and a registered notice to the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Merwara, to stop the further proceedings till the final decision of my appeal. No heed was paid and the election carried on the same day. Since then I had been waiting for the reply from the Commissioner's office and only today, 10th July, the following *communique* has been received by me:
>
> With reference to his letter No. 117/J dated the 22nd June 1924, Mr. Jamaluddin is informed that the order by which his name was omitted from the Beawar municipal electoral roll was revised by the Commissioner, who directed that his name might be entered, but as this order was only passed on the 26th November 1923, it could not be communicated in time to enable the applicant to exercise the privilege of voting.

This is like sending a reprieve after hanging. The right of voting at the present moment may not be of much consequence. But when people become alive to their rights, one vote is enough to turn the scales on momentous occasions. Mr. Jamaluddin is entitled to an explanation of the extraordinary delay in a matter that required no prolonged investigation and when the Commissioner

must have known that the elections were pending. For me the incident furnishes an additional cause for non-co-operation. I look upon all such official acts with considerable suspicion. They betray contempt of popular opinion and rights. That people may not have an immediate remedy against the abuse is to me no reason for associating directly or indirectly with the authorities in conducting Indian administration in utter defiance of public opinion.

Young India, 17-7-1924

214. LETTER TO NANABHAI ICHHARAM MASHRUWALA

SABARMATI,
Ashadh Vad 3 [*July 19, 1924*][1]

BHAI NANABHAI,

I have your letter. I went through the translation. There is no reason why you should be unhappy. It is when the world worships us that we have to be apprehensive. Maybe, God is nearer to us when it condemns us. Mirabai used to laugh when she heard the eulogy of the world. Do tender your resignation by all means. It is not at all desirable to stay on at the cost of your health. However, to be cautious, you may consult Jamnalalji[2]. The test of one's religion lies in suffering with equanimity heat and cold, misery and happiness.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

NANABHAI ICHHARAM, ESQ.
AKOLA
BERAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 4316. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

[1] The postmark bears this date.
[2] Jamnalal Bajaj

215. *ENLIGHTENED OR HALF-BAKED?*

A student named Ganpat wrote this letter[1] to the members of his family and left his home on July 7.

There is as much ignorance as patriotism in this letter. There can be no comparison between Dyerism and the act of an Englishman who abused a woman. Those who move about in cities always see such ugly scenes. It is not that the whites alone abuse Indian women. Indians, too, do so and even beat them. Who has not seen impudent Indian station-masters and policemen harass women? Can these acts of wickedness be prevented by running away from them?

Why did student Ganpat look on silently when he found the white man abusing the woman? If he felt hurt, he had two or three alternatives before him : Employing non-violence and willing to bear beating if he got it while courteously dissuading the white man, he could have saved the woman from the abuses. Or, if he was a believer in "tit for tat", he would have made the quarrel his own and fought with him. If he was a co-operator, he would have employed the third alternative of taking the woman to a police station and registering a complaint. If he failed to get justice that way, he would have become a satyagrahi. Considered from any point of view, running away was by no means a remedy. Such a remedy is likely to prove a further bondage. Student Ganpat writes to say that he has now understood the significance of life. God alone knows what he has understood. What will he achieve by running away? He could have done what was expected of him by staying at home. By becoming a coward and running away, one acquires no wisdom and no courage either. All cannot become Buddhas. Sarasvatichandra[2] lived, of course, in the imagination of Govardhanbhai. Student Ganpat aspires to surpass even Sarasvatichandra. Govardhanbhai made Sarasvatichandra go round and round the same place like an oilman's bullock. He did not at all become "new". Even after having new experiences, he abandoned Kumud[3] and accepted Kusum[4] and in the end made her worship him. What we have to learn from Sarasvatichandra is

[1] Not translated here

[2] The hero of the Gujarati novel *Sarasvatichandra* by Govardhanbhai Tripathi

[3] & [4] Sisters, characters in *Sarasvatichandra*

that we must never swerve from our duty. We should face a hardship which we cannot remove and try to find out remedies for it. Remedies will be found by studying hardship; they will not be had by running away from them.

If student Ganpat has not yet become a forest-dweller and reads *Navajivan* even in hiding, and if he happens to read this issue, he should return home in response to the request of an experienced person like me. He should continue his studies; if he has no sound physique, he should acquire it; he should certainly remain a celibate; he should, of course, be a devotee of God; he should learn that the essence of life is service and understand that one cannot serve by running away.

I do not want to say that retreat to the forest yields no solution. One can learn a lot by going there, but one must become qualified for it. All of us should not set out to become Buddhas. We should remain Sudamas.[1] Lord Krishna who stopped Arjuna from fleeing[2] knew his business. Rama honoured his father's promise but kept Bharat pinned to Ayodhya and himself went to the forest where he lived a life of service. Even in the forest he shaped himself and became an ideal man. Fortunately, there are not many students who run away; hence I need not dilate further on the episode of student Ganpat. But students who have not run away from home have a lot to learn from Ganpat. When we see suffering, we should not feel unconcerned or apathetic. We should try and cultivate a feeling exactly like Ganpat's. We should not sell our education for a cowrie. We should receive education for the benefit of our country and use it in her service. Cultivating as much feeling as Ganpat, we should add to it a sense of discrimination and proportion. With the sense of proportion, we should cultivate patience. Having analysed a situation and found remedies, let us be firm in applying them. Let us think a lot before taking a decision, but once it is taken, let us be adamant in implementing it. Ganpat certainly does not deserve contempt. He is not to be pitied even. He merits praise. Only, we should not take the step he took hastily; we should create the solitude of a forest just where we are. Peace, renunciation, and so on, are states of mind. It is true that some attain peace by wandering about, but some others get it while shaping themselves in the midst of

[1] Sudama was a poor Brahmin friend of Lord Krishna.

[2] In the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna, the third of the Pandava brothers, had wished to flee the battlefield as he did not like to fight his cousins, the Kauravas.

ordinary, daily drudgery. We may follow the path trodden by many. This is the royal road.

Live as you may,
Find God any how.

So wrote Akha. He was truly learned.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-7-1924

216. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A friend who is a student of non-co-operation has asked me some questions which I reproduce here as they are of interest to many:

Q. Our opposition is directed not against individuals but against a "system". Then what does "system" mean—mobilization, tradition or culture?

A. Certainly, it is not mobilization. Tradition, yes; also culture to the extent that it is responsible for tradition.

Q. In the article entitled "Rabbi May" in *Young India*,[1] you write that, through the injustice meted out to Sir Sankaran Nair, the wickedness of this regime has been further exposed. You write to the members of the Indian National Congress: "If the Government courts and schools attract us and yet we oppose them, then our opposistion is not against a system but against individuals . . . My swaraj consists in maintaining intact the spirit of our culture."

Considering these two extracts, we find it suggested in the first that the government is under the control of the whites, while the second one contains a dig at our culture.

A. That is not so at all. Even if there had been an Indian judge in the Sankaran Nair case, he would have dealt him similar injustice. Since the judge was a supporter of the present policy of the British Government, he could give no other judgment. We in India know from experience that, at critical junctures, we cannot expect justice from Indian judges working under the current administration. The fault is not theirs but that of the system. An ordinary man cannot transcend his environment. He who can transcend it will not work a moment under such an unacceptable system. Non-co-operation teaches us this very principle. I have often said that, if the administration is to continue according to the current system,

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 12-6-1924.

it would be unacceptable to me even if every official is an Indian.

Q. It is my impression that the scheme of non-co-operation was devised not to protect our culture—protection of culture may well be its indirect though, in a sense, very important result—but to maintain our self-respect.

A. Since the attack on our self-respect was obvious, it was more effective to give prominence to it. But our self-respect was the basis of our culture. Now, when we see the danger of fascination exercised by courts, schools, etc., despite the fact that the respect due to us has not been restored as yet, we expose the veiled attack on our culture. Such successive arguments, of course, are not deliberately advanced. Circumstances give rise to them. If we go deep into the subject, we are able to see that words like honour, culture, system, etc., have a close relationship to one another and that all of them have a common origin.

Q. I am not sure whether there is anything really harmful in Government courts and yet I would not lodge there a complaint against my neighbour because they are the courts of an alien Government which oppresses us. Likewise, he who does not see any defect in the present educational system should also boycott it. Even if the medicines to be had at a Government hospital are very good or even if the police arrangements are praiseworthy, the non-co-operator should not take the benefit of these.

A. Those who see nothing wrong in the courts and schools except that they are run by an alien Government find it difficult to non-co-operate. What is wrong in these institutions is not their being run by an alien Government, but their being a part of a faulty system. But here a definition of system is called for because the questioner has used the word "educational system". I see defects even in the educational system of the Government. But that is not the reason for my opposition. My opposition is to the system of Government administration. It is the system in which the financial interest of the rulers is dominant and in which religion or morality, call it what you will, has a minor place. It is the system in which the rulers do not hesitate to employ Dyerism in order to protect their economic interests and are not afraid of committing any sin. If the system were not so selfish, there would have been no reason to call the British Government alien. The truth of this argument may be tested thus: Suppose this Government feels sorry for the Punjab massacre, stops the import of foreign cloth, encourages khadi, forgoes the income from opium and liquor, reduces its military expenditure by 75 per cent, regards the promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity as its duty and respects public opinion in other ways; then

who will oppose it? And if anyone does so, who will listen to him? Even if they are defective in other respects, we shall not boycott the existing courts and schools. This kind of selfishness in Government administration or system is at the very basis of modern or Western culture. But the Government's Dyerism, etc., which are the manifest results of that culture, are sufficient to rouse opposition even in those who do not wish to think thus deeply over the matter.

Q. You write: "The aim of the Government's policy is to Anglicize us. The moment we get Anglicized, our English rulers will hand over the reins of Government to us and accept us as their agents." Have the Englishmen been here with such an unselfish motive? They loudly proclaim as a virtue what you regard as a fault in them. Will the Englishmen quit if we adopt the European system? Even then, how can we become their voluntary agents? Do not conflicts arise between England and Germany even though they have a common culture? I should say that conflicts arise precisely because their culture is common.

A. Many issues are involved in this question. If we become Anglicized we shall certainly cease to be wearers of khadi. Modern culture is, in effect, materialistic and opposed to the claims of the *atman*. By becoming Anglicized, we shall be adopting a system of exploiting all others in the world. Then we shall be indifferent to the condition of farmers and make brute force the basis of our existence. In that case, military expenditure, etc., will remain unchanged. If that happens, they will have nothing to say against us.

When our wants considerably multiply, we shall be England's biggest customers and, consequently, its willing retailers, that is, agents. That England and Germany fought with each other is also a result of that same culture brought about in a different way. Both wanted to exploit weak nations and both wanted the largest share; hence the conflict. But there is a big difference between that fight and our fight. Theirs was a confrontation of equals, so there was no question of self-respect. We, of course, are conscious of our self-respect every moment. Once we adopt the culture of Europe, there will be no possibility of a conflict between Englishmen and us as long as we remain the customers of England. Englishmen repeatedly tell us that we are not yet fit to manage our own affairs; this is far from being absolute hypocrisy. Many believe and say that as long as our culture remains distinct, we shall not be qualified to carry on Government in accordance with the European system. How is it that South Africa, etc., have complete autonomy? Obser-

vers may see for themselves that since the whites there swear by the same culture, they have become England's agents. England sells its goods through those whites, hence it has no need to post its own men there. No one should believe that the same blood flows in their veins. If the whites of South Africa would now turn selfless and give first priority to the interests of the Negroes, England would feel embarrassed and worried despite the fact that the former are whites. Our experience tells us that, when some Englishmen adopt such a selfless attitude, English society boycotts them.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 20-7-1924

217. MY NOTES

Shri Indulal's Letter

I believe everyone has read Shri Indulal Yagnik's open letter to me. One sees clearly the spirit of patriotism in every line of this letter. Nowhere can one notice even a shadow of discourtesy. One does not like to point out blemishes, if at all there are any, in an article written with such a good intention. A feeling persists in my heart that it would be a sin to offer any reply to this letter. Is not refraining from reply the perfect answer to it? Shri Indulal's curiosity is endless. He wishes to find out the logical conclusion of every question. He is a born soldier and hence out for adventure. Just as he wishes to know everything, he wishes to do everything. Because of his excessive attachment to a cause, he does not feel even for a moment that there are things beyond his capacity. Can attachment recognize any limit? What can attachment not do? Hence, instead of setting a limit himself, he has left it to God to do it. This is as much a virtue as a weakness. In this letter I find him under the influence of both.

I for one welcome from him such a letter written out of love. I take this and similar articles as warnings to me. I learn patience from them and I come to understand my limitations.

It is not that I have given no thought to any of the drawbacks or arguments that Shri Indulal has brought to my notice. I have politely placed before the people the decision I have reached after full deliberation. In this weekly I have already cleared most of the doubts arising therefrom and shall give further clarification as occasion demands. Nevertheless, in regard to what I cannot

explain, I shall merely say: "Please find the rest of my explanation in my conduct."

Humour

A correspondent writes:[1]

Let the gentleman[2] from Dharwar submit if he likes an account of his clothes expense. But I should like myself to solve to some extent the correspondent's problem. Innocent replies should be given to innocent queries. Since this correspondent has indulged in an innocent joke, I wish to share with him the pleasure of the joke. Instead of that gentleman from Dharwar, I intend to undertake myself the contract of supplying clothes to this correspondent. Only this much change will have to be made. No one can enter into a contract to supply for Rs. 15 clothes worth Rs. 1,000. We can know from the Dharwar gentleman how many clothes he will need. He has been spending on his clothes Rs. 15 a year. I probably spend not even Rs. 3. The cost of my loin-cloth does not appreciably exceed this amount. Of course, I could do with only one towel while in jail. It served my need for over a year. Again, since I am used to having a separate handkerchief for the nose, I could improvise it from the superfluous parts of my loin-cloth. I have not exhausted the stock of this surplus material even now. But I do not ask this correspondent to feel satisfied with a loin-cloth. Nevertheless he will not need waistcoats, coats or costly dhotis. As a bedsheet cannot be included in clothes, according to his own calculation a long shirt will cost Rs. 4, a short dhoti Rs. 3, a towel Re. 1, caps Re. 1, that is a total expense of Rs. 9. If this correspondent does not mind imitating one who has Gujarat's helm in his hands,[3] he can do without a cap and may thus save a rupee. Satisfied with the above clothes as his dress, if he sends me what is saved out of Rs. 34,[4] I shall utilize it for the relief of people reduced to skeletons in Orissa or elsewhere. Clothes are meant to conceal the body as well as to protect it from cold and heat. Considering the question from this point of view, we do not need more clothes than a short dhoti reaching up to the knee, a long shirt and a cap. In the climatic conditions of our country, coats and waist-

[1] The letter is not translated here.

[2] Who wrote to Gandhiji in June 1924, saying that his annual expense on all his clothes, which were made from khaddar, came to Rs. 15 as against Rs. 50 when he used foreign cloth

[3] Gandhiji has in mind Vallabhbhai Patel.

[4] The correspondent had stated in his letter that one had to spend, in spite of economy, Rs. 34 a year on one's clothes, all of khaddar.

coats are a mere burden. Motilalji does not feel ashamed to attend the Central Legislative Assembly dressed in a long shirt, a short dhoti and a cap. The Deshbandhu's[1] dress does not consist of any more items. The only difference in the Ali Brothers' dress is that they wear trousers instead of dhotis. This correspondent has suggested one wrong thing. One need never wear dirty clothes for the sake of the country. He who himself washes with due care his dhoti and long shirt needs no soap at all or very little of it. Dirtiness is a sign of idleness. It has nothing to do with patriotism. It is the special duty of a khadi-wearer to keep his clothes white as milk. Yes, it is true that in that case there will be no room for superfluous clothes. And even if one wants to have them, the expense on soap or a washerman is bound to go up.

"SPIN, SPIN, SPIN"

A Maharashtrian gentleman writes:[2]

I place this correspondent's example before every Gujarati brother and sister. Those who firmly hold the faith that India can win true swaraj only through peaceful means have no need at all to employ other means. Swaraj through peaceful means is possible only when the people have single-minded devotion to a common mission. Violence becomes unavoidable when some people become impatient and coerce others who do not co-operate with them. This, of course, is not swaraj. It is nothing but falling out of the frying pan into the fire. It is not likely to benefit the millions of our people reduced to skeletons. On the contrary, they will be unwilling victims at a sacrifice. The custom of offering human beings as a sacrifice, which is considered a thing of the past, will be revived. This custom undoubtedly persists in Europe. What else are the recent terrible wars there if not human sacrifice? If they take place in India, they will involve millions, because they are not courageous enough to resist them.

At the present juncture, when there are many people with wavering minds, when there is mutual hatred, when there is intolerance of criticism, when allegations know no bounds, silence is the golden path. But work should be there along with silence, and that work is the plying of spinning-wheels.

To think that others will not spin at all is mere illusion. Like the question of others eating, this question also must not arise. If I have faith in myself, why should I bother about others? If others do not spin, we should make it a point to spin all the more

[1] C. R. Das

[2] The letter is not translated here.

ourselves on their behalf. If this happens, it will easily infect others.

Exaggeration

A correspondent writes:[1]

This is a very illusive argument and hence deserves to be rejected. A man is born dependent. If he were not born that way, his pride would have no limit. Leading an ascetic's life is the highest state of dependence, because an ascetic has to live on what others give him. This state enables him to secure the freedom of the *atman* and to realize its identity with the Supreme. We may do everything ourselves to avoid giving trouble to others, we may do without a thing which we cannot make, but a man who attempts to do all his work himself merely to prove his claim of self-dependence finally ends up as a self-willed individual. We wish to see the whole of society self-sufficient in the matter of food and clothing. People have become dependent on others in regard to cloth and hence they doubt whether they can again become self-dependent in that respect. So I advise every man and woman to become self-dependent in respect of cloth. It is likely that society can become self-sufficient only after individuals become self-dependent. The attempt to become self-dependent in matters other than this will halt the great, universal and essential endeavour in respect of cloth. Suppose that we can make for ourselves our own soap, pencils, pens, inkstand, etc., in addition to making cloth, we shall find that only one or two of us can do so; but that will not remove India's poverty.

To eradicate India's poverty, just the opposite course must be adopted. That is to say, people must give up all other unnecessary activities and try to make India self-sufficient in regard to cloth by spinning with their own hands. We have for years been doing wrong in our activities. Some say they will deliver India from bondage by starting soap mills, others say they will do so by starting lock factories, or leather works or bamboo-mat factories. This indicates the misdirected activities of society. It is only when we concentrate our minds firmly on one objective and become engrossed in the task of implementing it that we can achieve swaraj. I have found that such an objective is only the spinning-wheel activity, and hence I keep on harping on the

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that Gandhiji wished that all should cook and spin for themselves, but had wanted to know whether Gandhiji wanted everyone to be self-dependent in respect of all work.

theme. Hitherto no one has been able to point out to me any other activity comparable to it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-7-1924

218. PROFITS IN WEAVING

A correspondent writes to me in detail about his experience as a weaver. Omitting the details, I reproduce the substance here:[1]

It is clear that others cannot have such good opportunities or experiences. But this account and the others that I have already published show that, given perseverance and skill, weaving provides a means of livelihood.

He writes further:[2]

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-7-1924

219. NEW TYPE OF SPINNING-WHEEL

We find a note on a new type of spinning-wheel in the newspapers of Bombay. The Khadi Board has been asked to examine this wheel. So far no one has to our knowledge been able to make a spinning-wheel capable of turning out yarn with greater ease or of better quality. We see several types of spinning-wheels with negligible points of difference, but one need not give them any importance.

I urge every lover of khadi not to buy any "new type of spinning-wheel" which has not been approved by the Khadi Board. Many spinning-wheels of a new type have proved utterly useless and belied the claims advanced in their behalf. As things stand now, we are in a position to say that no one can supersede the old spinning-wheel once a few changes are introduced in

[1] This is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that two people knowing all about weaving and working for 8 or 9 hours a day could easily earn Rs. 2 to Rs. 3, on an average. He himself had found spinning and weaving very good leisure-time work.

[2] This is not translated here. He had added that he bought 3 or 4 maunds of cotton which provided cloth for 8 or 9 members of his family. His annual expense on clothes in 1922 exceeded Rs. 300, whereas now that he and his family had started spinning and weaving, it totalled only Rs. 40 or Rs. 50.

it. It would be, therefore, good if no one goes in for any "new type of spinning-wheel". If someone comes across a miraculous spinning-wheel, he should send it to the Khadi Board for inspection. He may propagate it or buy it only if the Board has approved of it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-7-1924

220. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Ashadh Vad 4 [July 20, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have your postcard. Mahadev told me yesterday that your article on Simla had been sent to you by Swami, who added that it was twenty days since it was sent. Have you not received it? I shall inquire about the passage you have mentioned. I can't say anything about my going to Simla. Even the date for my visit to the Punjab is not yet decided. And you are asking me to go to Simla. But you are neither a lord, nor a Governor, nor [Lord] Reading. Your invitation, therefore, stands no chance of acceptance.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6016. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] The article on Simla referred to in the letter was published in *Young India* in September 1924. In that year *Ashadh Vad* 4 fell on July 20.

221. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Ashadh Vad 6 [July 22, 1924][1]

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. You may come whenever you wish. God will do only what is good. I would advise you not to bring your son's daughter with you. Let the husband and wife do whatever they deem proper. The father is welcome to bring the daughter and leave her here. If you bring her now there is a possibility of the estrangement widening.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6017. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

222. LETTER TO INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI

Ashadh Krishna 6 [July 22, 1924][2]

CHI. INDRA,

I have your second letter. I hope you have got my reply to your earlier letter. I have received the file too. I am very impatient to reach Delhi.[3] Because of the doctors' warning I have postponed my journey. I will reach there as soon as possible.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

PROF. INDRA
"ARJUN" OFFICE
DELHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4858. Courtesy: Chandragupta Vidyalankar

[1] Earlier letters in this volume to the addressee suggest that this letter also was written in 1924. In that year *Ashadh Vad* 6 fell on July 22.

[2] & [3] In response to a call from Mahomed Ali, Gandhiji left for Delhi on August 16, 1924. In that year *Ashadh Krishna* 6 fell on July 22.

223. LETTER TO FULCHAND K. SHAH

[*July 23, 1924*][1]

BHAI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. There is only one way for you. The management are pledged to take the untouchables into that school[2]. That pledge cannot be broken. You must welcome the untouchables, and if, in consequence, all the students leave the school you should put up with it. If the management hand over the building to you and want to establish another school, they may do so. How can the principles proclaimed when the foundation was laid be now set aside? I shall certainly write a note on this in *Navajivan*.[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Do not give up your peace, patience and humility.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2821. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

224. THE PLIGHT OF TEACHERS

After describing the declining condition of national schools in a district, where out of fourteen seven have died out and the rest are sinking, and where attendance is reduced from 2,000 to 500, the headmaster of one of them writes:

> To be frank, the hearts of many of us, teachers of the national schools, sink when they think of their half-starved families and their crushing debts, and misgivings arise as to whether it is wise or foolish for a man embarrassed with debts to undergo so much suffering and whether it is advisable or not to serve the country in other ways than as starving schoolmasters. I should mention here that some of these teachers gave up at the call of their country much more lucrative situations.

This tale of woe need not frighten us. Nations are made after much travail. Either we must die like flies in an armed rebellion,

[1] The postmark bears this date.
[2] The national school of Wadhwan in Kathiawar
[3] *Vide* "Religion on Trial", 27-7-1924.

then submit to military autocracy and, in the distant and dim future, hope to have democratic rule; or by patient, natural, unperceived suffering evolve as a self-ruling, self-respecting nation. It is by sufferings such as the correspondent describes that we shall find a remedy for the difficulties that face us. These constitute the real training in swaraj. The fault is not wholly the parents'. It is inherent in our surroundings. We have not yet learnt the virtue of sustained work in defiance of all odds. Teachers are the centre round whom the whole of the national education system must revolve. If they lose their balance, the system must topple. But the teachers have been inexperienced. They have not all had the unquenchable fire for keeping alive the taste for national education. They have not the organizing ability, nor the power of concentration and consecration. Everywhere the workers, instead of specializing in one branch of service, have dabbled in everything with the result that they have been able to do nothing thoroughly. But this was inevitable. We are new to the game. Our rulers have trained us as clerks and put us to work requiring little thinking and less initiative. But the old order is changing. In the first flush of enthusiasm we seemed to be doing well, if not very well. Now that the enthusiasm has died out and the moisture of public support has dried up, only the hardiest plants will survive. Let me hope the schools and the schoolmasters that still remain are of the right stuff. They must beg from door to door for maintenance and not feel ashamed if they are honest workers. The headmaster has asked also specific questions, which being of general utility, I copy and answer below.

Q. How long can the poor teachers, embarrassed with increasing debts, continue to have connection with these schools working on starvation allowance?

A. Till death, even as a soldier fights till he is victorious or, which is the same thing, drops down dead.

Q. How long will the authorities continue these schools at a great loss of money, if even 1 per cent of the people do not want them?

A. No school has a right to exist if the people do not want it. But I would blame the authorities if the people who brought a school into being afterwards do not want it.

Q. Education can be suspended and workers can suffer for one year or two years or three years, but what will be the case if the fight for swaraj continues for an indefinite period?

A. Those who can suffer for one to three years will find themselves inured to suffering for thirty years.

Q. How can the few boys that really want national education read where no national school exists?

A. If the parents or the boys or girls, for that matter, are resourceful, they will find out a way. It is a superstition to think that education can only be had at schools or only through English or in a particular, orthodox style. To learn spinning and weaving is an education of first-class importance at the present moment. Let us also remember that the majority of Indian villages have no schools at all.

Q. How long should our countrymen be allowed to vote for a resolution which they will never carry out in practice? All will vote for boycott of Government schools but very few of these voters will send their boys to national schools.

A. Not one minute longer than I can help. All my fight in the A.I.C.C. was directed towards our being true to our resolutions.

I know that the replies I have given will be considered unsatisfactory by many. But I dare say that they are the only correct and practical answers. We must do away with camouflage. If the nation as a whole does not want national schools *in answer* to the boycott of (not supplementary to) Government schools, it must be altered. The minority that may still want the boycott must make good their desire by running their own national schools, but not under the Congress *aegis*. These schools will be run only where they are wanted. If there be only one such school, it will continue without being disheartened. Faith knows no disappointment.

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225. *NOTE ON C. F. ANDREWS'S ARTICLE*[1]

For a fuller account of the effects of the poet's humanitarian and peace-giving mission, I cannot do better than refer the reader to the excellent Viswa-Bharati bulletins on the visit issued by the editors of the *Viswa-Bharati Magazine*.

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[1] This followed Andrews's article "India in the Far East" which, among other things, gave an account of Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Japan.

226. WHAT TO DO WITH THE YARN?

The Khadi Board continues to receive queries as to the use to be made of the yarn that is to be delivered to it by Congress representatives. In accordance with the Congress resolution, every representative has to send at least 2,000 yards of well-twisted, even yarn per month. It is in the nature of a subscription. But all kinds of questions are being raised. Some members want to keep the yarn themselves and have it woven for personal wear. It is an excellent idea but, at the present moment, I would suggest suppression of that desire. The efficacy of any programme depends upon uniformity and punctuality and the magnitude of execution. It is the volume that counts. But the volume is impossible if each member wants to act according to his own wish. Whilst there is much to be said in favour of each member spinning for his own clothing, at the present moment much more is to be said in favour of co-operative spinning. The cost of sending the yarn is of no consequence when it is remembered that parcels are to be made up in each province and despatched to the Central Board. But look at the advantages:

(1) Monthly return of yarn.

(2) Check from month to month on the quality of spinning and consequent possibility of improvement.

(3) Check upon danger of slackness on the part of spinners.

(4) A healthy rivalry between spinners and provinces as to the quantity and quality.

(5) The certainty of cheapening the price of khaddar if the response of the Congressmen is at all in accordance with the resolution.

My advice to the Khaddar Board will be to have all the yarn woven where it can be done cheapest unless each province would prefer to have it locally woven. The khaddar should be sold at very low rates to the poor in famine areas at the discretion of the Board. It can be sold to the spinners at concession rates if they so desire. But it is really too early at this stage to decide finally as to the disposal of the khaddar manufactured from the yarn. Much must depend upon the quantity received. I suggest to those who are anxious to wear khaddar woven from yarn of their own spinning that it is much more meritorious to pool the whole yarn and for individuals to receive khaddar equal in weight to their own yarn. Under the circumstances created by the A.I.C.C. resolution, the

desire to wear khaddar of self-spun yarn will be regarded selfish in comparison to its gift to the common fund. Lastly, no member is bound to send more than 2,000 yards of yarn if he does not wish to. He may give half an hour to the nation and keep another half hour's labour for his own use. Let me say to novices that many have already finished their quota of 2,000 yards. And those who are giving all their spare time to spinning hope to go beyond 10,000 yards. Some members of the staff of the Gujarat Vidyapith, though not Congress representatives, are spinning 5,000 yards each per month of which they will give 3,000 to the nation and collect the remaining 2,000 for their personal use. I would urge the Congress men and women, whether representatives or others, for the time being willingly and whole-heartedly to fall in with the national project, imperfect though it may appear to them to be. They will find that it will become perfect by reason of hearty co-operation. No scheme has yet been produced by the human brain which has not contained flaws or which has not been criticized. But practical wisdom consists in helping the execution of a scheme which has commended itself to the majority. Every objection must not be raised to the dignity of conscience. Fundamentals are very few indeed. In any case, there can be no question of conscience in deciding whether it is better to pool 2,000 yards of yarn or reserve it for one's own use.

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227. A GLOOMY PICTURE

A Mussalman correspondent writes thus feelingly from Amritsar:

> The free fights between Hindus and Mussalmans in Upper India which have become almost a daily occurrence indicate the complete inability of the two slave nations to find a solution of their domestic problems, more so their inability to assume responsibility of governing a vast country composed of many heterogeneous elements.
>
> Your efforts at bridging the gulf were no doubt successful, but the warring elements reappeared soon after your incarceration. Where before your incarceration there existed fellow-feeling and sympathy between the two for their having been long neighbours, today there is disunion and discord. All the big towns of the Punjab are cockpits for both the nations and there appears to be no prospect of the old relations ever being restored.

> Will you please think out a remedy before the disease becomes incurable? Please do come to the Punjab and see things for yourself. Your zest for khaddar is useless unless and until you have restored the old conditions. Amritsar which saw the glorious days of 1919 is today a picture of gloom. Out of nearly two hundred thousand people hardly 50 would be found wearing khadi, and even these do so because they must, holding as they do Congress offices. All this is due to the Hindu-Muslim tension. Remove the curse and everything will be allright. Alas, the foundation of *sangathan* was laid at a most inauspicious moment.

There is no doubt that the picture given by the correspondent is exaggerated. If there are free fights between Hindus and Mussalmans daily in the Punjab, it must be a most difficult place to live in today. But I have no doubt that at least outwardly the Punjab is as peaceful as any other province in India. Nor is the correspondent correct when he lays everything at the door of the *sangathan*. It has no doubt aggravated the disease which was already there. Both the communities have lost their balance.

If the Punjabis have given up khaddar because of the tension, their love of khaddar or of the country could only be skin-deep. But as I do not think that they have less love of the country than the others, the cause of the decline of khaddar must be sought elsewhere. The obvious cause lies in the want of faith in the necessity of khaddar for swaraj and the desire for the soft life which the muslin and the calico denote. Of all the provinces, the Punjab is today able to carry out the boycott of foreign cloth if it wishes. But it does not. I have heard it said that many Hindus decline to wear khaddar because it is woven by the Mussalman weavers and the Mussalmans refuse to wear it because they say they are not interested in swaraj; they want to drive away the English but they want to revive the old Mussalman rule. And it is contended the old Mussalman rule cannot be revived if the charkha binds both Hindus and Mussalmans to a common ideal. These I regard as vapourings of heated brains. The poor Hindus and the poor Mussalmans have no time to think of the things mentioned above. They will gladly add a few rupees to their annual income which spinning does.

Apart, however, from the decline of the khaddar and from the exaggerations of the correspondent, the seriousness of the tension cannot be denied. The break-down at Delhi of the authority of the leaders is too glaring to be slurred over.

Fortunately, there are already indications of reviving sanity. The Jats and the butchers are reported to have realized the folly

of breaking one another's heads and to have made peace. But the most hopeful news comes from correspondents who tell me that, if there were frenzied men bent on slaughter, there were also sane men and women bent on saving. These instances are not isolated but sufficiently numerous to show that love of peace was at least as keen between the two communities as the love of war. The latter is not natural. It is like a carbuncle. But peace persists. The two sections have simply to make up their minds to respect each others' religious customs and the rest will be easy. So far as asking me to go to the Punjab is concerned, it is an open secret that I am pining to go there as well as the other places where tension exists. The spirit is willing, the flesh alone is weak. As soon as I can undertake travels with any degree of safety, I propose in the company of Maulana Shaukat Ali to visit Sind and the Punjab.

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228. *AFFLICTED SOUTH*

The monsoons are playing an exasperating trick. The South is submerged and the North is pining for the rains. There is a heart-rending wire from South Canara which says: 'Devastating floods again. Forty feet above normal. River level only four feet below last year's.' Then follows a detailed account of families rendered homeless; people fleeing terror-struck in all directions. The volunteers were hoping that the relief work done by them after last year's floods would put the starving families on their feet again. Now the hope is perhaps blasted. It will be remembered that the volunteers were organizing families by giving them spinning and carding work. Nature however has more misery in store for the poor homeless families. No wonder Mr. Sadashiv Rao[1] appeals for help. Let us hope that the effect of the floods is not so serious as the account before me suggests. Detailed and accurate information is eagerly awaited.

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[1] Karnad Sadashiv Rao (1881-1937); lawyer, social worker and Congress leader of South Kanara; four times President, Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee

229. *WAR AGAINST OPIUM*

The White Cross is an international anti-narcotic society whose headquarters are in Washington. It appears to have branches all over the world. Its letter-head contains distinguished names as trustees or standing council. Its executive secretary, Mr. McKibben, writes a long letter urging me to secure India's co-operation in the White Cross crusade against opium. I cull the following passages from the letter:

> The people of China resisted its invasion in two wars and in 1906 took the first opportunity in a century and a half to gain deliverance by pulling up or ploughing under the poppy on millions of acres. So long and so binding had been their enslavement that it was predicted that at any attempt to take opium away the Chinese people would rise in insurrection. Spence, an English writer, said in 1882 that "revolution would result if the Chinese Government would undertake suppression of the growth of the poppy, the quiet seaports would be turned into hell, streets would run with blood." So far were these dire forecasts from coming true that no action of the Chinese Government was ever so popular as its determined and successful campaign for poppy destruction. It became a fervent, sweeping, religious movement. In a thousand cities and villages old smokers stacked up their pipes in piles as high as the houses as a burnt offering to Heaven. Jubilant processions, music and banners, voiced the general thanksgiving, while women wept tears of joy that the century-old curse was lifted.
>
> Their rejoicings were short-lived. The British Government kept its promise to cease importing opium but, as has happened before and since, as you too well know, the Western world kept the word of promise to the ear but broke it to the heart. In place of opium there was poured upon devoted China a flood of morphine, heroin and cocaine, ten times worse. In this atrocity, I blush to say, the United States was a participant until a recent day. In consequence of chaotic conditions, military chieftains have now forced upon unwilling Chinese farmers, a renewal of poppy planting, excusing themselves because native opium is better than foreign morphine. Those who know China best believe that her fundamentally sound conscience will again respond when the nations give them support and will again rid their land of opium.
>
> It is universally recognized that no one nation can save itself. Opium products are so compact, so easily concealed and the wages of the traffic so enormous that, as long as the drugs are produced, they will find their

consumers. The American Congress has accordingly appealed to all nations to unite in suppressing the opium poppy and the cocaine shrub, reserving only such amounts as are considered necessary in medicine and science. A Conference has been agreed on to meet in Geneva in November 1924, to put into effect this proposal. This Conference will be vested with authority whereby it may, if it will, inaugurate measures that will deliver the world from the menace.

The question is now before the world, how may this Narcotic Conference be brought to act in the spirit as well in the letter of this mandate? Shall they meet the world's hopes or blast them? To you, Sir, I need not name one all-powerful agency that may be invoked, namely, the power of public opinion, the focussing of the world's conscience and conviction upon the meetings of that Conference.

The organization of which I have the honour to be a representative, the White Cross International Anti-narcotic Society, is seeking a voicing of public opinion and conscience, focussing it upon the November Conference in a way to move them irresistibly to use the opportunity providentially in their hands and rid the world of its greatest physical menace.

The experience of China should convince India that fears which have sometimes been expressed of "Oriental revolt" against "deprivation of opium" will prove groundless in India as they did in China. It is perhaps not strange that some representatives of the British Government in India fear that India is so wedded to opium that "serious consequences would follow any attempt to take it away". There is far less danger of this in India than in China. India has never become enslaved to the extent of China, even though its victims have largely been those on whom the whole future depends, namely the babies doped by their mothers day after day while the mothers are at work in the factories. Indian ladies, who are devoted social workers, say this practice is well-nigh universal. If "revolt" is apprehended, it would seem to a friendly observer most likely to be a revolt of the people against a Governmental policy which poisons to death the babies in their mothers' arms, or leaves them alive as if born old, pallid, emaciated, stunted, blasted in body and hopeless of future, the motive being that the Government might get the revenues "which it needs".

The world can never be delivered until India saves herself by ceasing to poison her own oncoming generations and by ceasing to pour her opium into the veins of other nations. For the sake of India and of the world, we lay before Mr. Gandhi and the people of India this our request for expressions of their mind such as will convince the coming Opium Conference that India both seeks deliverance from her own opium enslavement and joins hands for the redemption of the world. . . .

> Furthermore, may we ask what is the wish of the people of India as to who shall be their representatives and spokesmen at the Opium Conference? In previous meetings, have the convictions of India been accurately voiced? Whether sent unofficially or, as would be more fitting, clothed with full powers of representation, we would suggest that India send some of her best sons to speak for her that the world may know her mind. If in any way our organization can assist in bringing before the Conference the expressions of Indian conviction, we shall be at your service.

The White Cross may rely upon India's co-operation in its noble work. The A.I.C.C. has only recently unanimously passed a resolution which places on record its emphatic condemnation of the opium policy of the Government of India. If every poppy plant were rooted out, there would be no protest in the land against the act. The people will certainly rejoice when the whole of the revenue from intoxicating drinks and drugs is stopped, their sale absolutely prohibited except strictly as medicines to be sold by certificated chemists or druggists.

But unfortunately for us and the world, India's opinion is today represented by a Government that does not represent its people. At the forthcoming convention, therefore, it will not be the people of India that will be represented, but it would be the foreign rule over India that will be represented, in the interests not so much of humanity as chiefly of its revenue. Whether it would serve any useful purpose to send an unofficial representative, such as Mr. Andrews, truly representing the people, is a matter to be considered by the A.I.C.C.

Let us, however, see what the goal of the humanitarian crusade is. Miss La Motte has shown by unchallengeable figures that the world's production of opium is far in excess of its medical requirements and that so long as it continues, so long will the immoral and soul-destroying traffic in it continue in spite of efforts to the contrary. She has shown, too, that the Government of India is the greatest culprit in the matter. The goal cannot be reached till the Government of India honestly carries out the wish of the best mind of the world, immediately to reduce the cultivation of opium in its jurisdiction to the lowest term possible and without counting the cost. The Government of India alone has blocked the way and it is feared that it will do so again. And it will do so not because India wishes, but because she is helpless.

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230. IN FULFILMENT OF PROMISE

When Mr. M. K. Acharya wrote his open letter to me, I promised to attempt a reply to it in these pages. I am sorry that I was not able to do so earlier. Having very carefully read the letter, there is not much room for difference. My fortunate position is that I am able to look at things from my opponent's standpoint and share his views to that extent. It is, however, my unfortunate position that I do not always succeed in inducing them to look at things from my stand-point. If I could, we should have a delightful agrement even in our differences.

With the presentation of causes and the origin of non-co-operation, there is tolerable agreement between Mr. Acharya and me. But on the construction of Congress resolutions we differ. But I should agree with him from his standpoint that the preamble to my resolution before the A.I.C.C. goes beyond the letter of some Congress resolutions. But much water has since flown under the Kaveri bridge (shall I say?) I invite him to study the previous A.I.C.C. resolutions and he will find the preamble adumbrated there. I thought the adoption of the charkha *was* held to be an indispensable preliminary to civil disobedience. The conditions have been repeatedly laid down in resolutions. There was enough opposition at the last A.I.C.C. to many things, but not a voice was raised against the preamble, for the simple reason that almost every one had previously acknowledged the necessity of the charkha for the purpose of civil disobedience. I hold that I was, therefore, justified in introducing the preamble.

On merits, I must reiterate my belief that, without hand-spinning becoming universal, there will be no swaraj *in terms of the masses*. It is true that we were hand-spinning before we came under foreign rule. But we did not then know the national necessity of it. Do we not often neglect our lungs by inhaling impure air? When, however, they become bad, we realize their necessity as well as that of pure air. Return to the spinning-wheel means so much organization, so much co-operation, so much saving of money and so much distribution of it among the masses and so much removal of temptation from the way of the Englishmen, that it surprises me to find anyone question the possibility of establishing swaraj through the spinning-wheel. I need hardly point out that I have not suggested the spinning-wheel under every circumstance to every nation for

the attainment of swaraj. Mr. Acharya will see that he argued against the charkha from premises I have not advanced.

Then take the Councils. I do not deny the use, to some extent, of Councils. All I contend is that they are of no consequence to the masses. And since the Congress to remain national must mainly represent the masses and present a programme in which masses can freely participate, I submit that wisdom lies in keeping the boycotts intact. The soundness of my proposition will be realized in the same proportion as we descend to and identify ourselves with the masses. The lawyers and the Councillors, if they will appreciate the truth of what I am saying, can serve the masses and belong to the Congress without aspiring to executive offices.

The evil is not in the programme. The evil lies in our mutual distrust, intolerance, want of imagination and hankering after office. If both the parties will cease to want power and learn merely to serve, the programme of non-co-operation will be found to be the only true national programme. Is it difficult to realize that the majority of villages that are outside the influence of the rail-roads know nothing of law-courts, schools or Councils and are boycotters of necessity? If we who want to serve them will discard the Government influence, there is hope for these millions of villagers. If we do not do so, the truth of a remark seriously made by an able patriot will be realized. He said:

> I do not believe your programme because I do not feel as you do for the masses. Rather than that they should die of starvation and plague, I would sacrifice them on the battle-field by simply driving them to it. It will be a reluctant sacrifice, it is true, but it is necessary. When these millions who are merely a burden to society are made to die on the battle-field, India will be a land worth living in. It will be a free India containing only free men, not starvelings and helots.

I told the friend that his argument was irresistible if I could accept his premises. But, as we could not accept each other's premises, we agreed to differ, respected each other's conclusions and parted the best of friends. For me I must sink or swim with the lowest of my countrymen. If Mr. Acharya can be induced to realize this position, he will find that I am the same person he knew me in 1920.

Young India, 24-7-1924

231. NOTES

To P. B.

I must apologize for having delayed my reply to your questions. Here it is:

(1) I do advocate a prohibitive import duty on foreign cloth even though it may only benefit home mills and not khaddar. I am impatient to bring about a total boycott of foreign cloth. I do not dread the home mill competition with khaddar, for I know that our mills are today not in a position to supply India's requirements. But supposing they do, I should not hesitate for the sake of protecting the masses, to protect khaddar against our mills as I would now protect them against foreign competition. My study of the figures goes to show that boycott of foreign cloth will equally benefit both our mills and hand-spun khaddar.

(2) Protection of khaddar I do not regard as compulsion just as I would not regard prohibition of drink as compulsion. It is no part of the duty of the State to countenance for the sake of a minority what public opinion regards as detrimental to the moral or the material well-being of the people as a whole.

(3) I do not dread foreign capital or foreigners coming to India if they do not, as now, receive favoured treatment in a variety of ways. We are well able to hold our own in fair and equal competition.

(4) I am personally opposed to great trusts and concentration of industries by means of elaborate machinery. But at the present moment I am concerned with destroying the huge system of exploitation which is ruining India. If India takes to khaddar and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery system as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and for life-saving purposes.

Acharya Gidwani

Shrimati Gangabai Gidwani has received the following from her husband:

> The Superintendent has been good enough to allow me to write a two-page letter to you. My privilege letter will be due at the end of the next month. I have really nothing much to communicate that will be allowed to go. My health is perfectly good. Do not believe any rumours to the contrary. I have got used to my room and I get quite good food. I am given a seer of milk and a chatak of ghee from the jail and I send

for pumpkin and potatoes from the bazaar. Sometimes I send for mangoes also. Nothing else is available here. I was given a charpai but I refused it because, you know, I always prefer to sleep on the even hard floor in the embrace of Mother Earth. I was also offered the privilege of half an hour morning and evening outside my room; but I declined the offer as I think it will only make me feel the confinement of the remaining 23 hours the more. I am spending eight hours a day in reading, six in sleep, three in spinning, four in walking and exercise and the rest in cooking, eating and whiling away. I have been given a prisoner to help me in cooking and cleaning. I used to be given all letters and parcels received for me. But owing to some misunderstanding, they were stopped three weeks ago. I am glad to inform you, however, that the Superintendent has been good enough to restore this, the sweetest of all my privileges, I trust that you will now send me daily accounts of the progress you are making in your studies, the children's health and all about relations and friends. Please thank Bapu, Jivat, Kodu, Champaneria, Karamchand, Valecha, for their letters. I hope you are spinning regularly and that you have not neglected your Hindi. Two pages are finished.

'Glimpses of Khadi Work'

Under the above heading, the indefatigable Mr. B. F. Bharucha has issued a report of his tour in Bengal. It is a business-like and instructive document. I pass by the paragraph bemoaning the fact that, had the Ahmedabad mills not played false during the Partition days, Bengal would today be wholly swadeshi; also the fact that, at Serajganj Swadeshi Exhibition, the khadi was bastard khadi except at Dr. P. C. Ray's stall. I pass by Mr. Bharucha's appeal to Deshbandhu Das asking him to insist upon his satyagrahis wearing khaddar and to set apart a number of workers for pure khaddar organization. But I must let Mr. Bharucha speak in his own enthusiastic manner of the splendid work being done by Dr. Ray and his able lieutenant, Babu Satis Chandra Dasgupta:

Dr. P. C. Ray is the Apostle of charkha in Bengal. Despite a weak frame and poor health, this old Professor of Chemistry is crossing fields and flooded areas to save the Bengal farmer from the ravages of famine and flood. And his panacea today is not any Western mechanism, nor Western preparation. It is *the ancient and universal cottage wheel, the charkha.* In the flooded areas of Rajshahi, etc., Dr. Ray has saved the starving people by reviving the charkha, and by popularizing khaddar. Besides that, he started the Khaddar Board, the Khadi Pratishthan and the Deshi Rang Fund to carry on the khaddar propaganda in Bengal. Every week he needs three thousand rupees to keep his charkhas and looms going. He has been having a fairly large stock of khaddar, and unless this is sold off regularly,

it will be very difficult for old Dr. Ray to keep all the charkhas going. The revered Acharya went on his knees at the Serajganj Khaddar Exhibition, and begged of the audience to buy khadi. Will not Bengal—patriotic, sensitive, swadeshi Bengal—respond to the clarion call of her devoted son: 'Buy khadi and keep the charkhas going?' Dr. Ray has given away even his savings (Rs. 40,000/-), for khadi work. Verily he is the Apostle of khaddar in Bengal.

I shall now give some glimpses of the spinning and weaving centres visited by me. They are Atrai, Raninagar, Talora and Sukhia (Chittagong). At Atrai they (Dr. Ray and Satish Babu) run a school for ginning, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving. They also have a dispensary and a small hospital which is a real boon to villagers. Atrai is the base where they stock *kapas* and distribute it in surrounding villages for ginning, carding, spinning and weaving. Atrai had an old silk industry, which was practically killed by the East India Company. Here we saw the charkhas plying again; and the yarn was good. A boy that had appeared at the Matriculation Examination could ply the charkha very well. At Raninagar we saw the handlooms working. Whilst it was pleasant to see them running, it was painful to see the weavers clad in foreign cloth, and worse still, making their own clothes from mill or foreign yarn! They promised to discontinue this. At Talora, we saw the spinning and weaving centres. At all these places, there was much enthusiasm for the charkha and the loom. Even girls of seven and eight could spin so well. We had a sort of spinning competition, and nearly a dozen girls came forward spontaneously. Even old women joined them. The males were silent spectators and we obtained from them a pledge not to buy foreign cloth anymore.

And what a splendid organization has been got up by Babu Satish Chandra Dasgupta, the able, unassuming, and indefatigable lieutenant of Dr. Ray! He has standardized the gin, the carding-bow, and the charkha. He holds stocks of these and the spare parts at the base. He is running the school where ginning, carding, spinning, and weaving are taught. Here he prepares his volunteers, workers and inspectors. He has written three booklets in Bengali for instructions to workers. He has introduced a complete system of records. There are altogether eighteen different kinds of printed books to keep a complete record of *kapas* purchased, issued and stocked; of cotton purchased, issued, and carded; of cotton spun and of yarn woven. There are ledgers of carders, spinners and weavers. There are the weekly reports, and classified records of gins, carding-bows, charkhas and looms. There are the usual account books. The records are complete, and are very well kept. Then Satish Babu has prepared a contingent of willing and diligent workers. They leave the base early morning with two sacks across their shoulders. They carry cotton, spare parts, scales and account sheets. They look like the village

> postmen and are greeted as such! Nay, they are welcomed even by the purdah women. They give the cotton, take yarn, pay charges, and write up the spinners' a/c card. They repair the charkhas, give some help or instruction to those that need it, and thus are means of supplementing the family's income. The weavers usually call at the centre for yarn, deliver khadi, get the charges and take away further quantity of yarn. They have their cards also, and these are regularly written up. The workers return in the evening after their village rounds, and it is a sight to see them toiling in scorching sun or heavy rain, and yet all cheerful! Satish Babu has not only put his heart and soul into the khadi work; he has even given away[rupees] three thousand at the start and rupees six thousand in June last for khadi work, and he is not a rich man. Satish Babu has prepared slides for khadi propaganda. He has written a book, with telling illustrations. May God bless pioneers and workers like Dr. P. C. Ray and his able lieutenant, Babu Satish Chandra Dasgupta! Amen!

I join mine with Mr. Bharucha's 'Amen'.

Mr. Bharucha is equally enthusiastic about the ability of the charkha to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together. Here is his paragraph:

> In Bengal all the volunteers and the workers of the Bengal Relief Committee khadi work, of the Khadi Board, the Khadi Prathishthan, and Deshi Rang Fund are almost all Hindus. And the largest numbers of those who take the benefit of these institutions are Muslims. These Hindu workers walk miles from their centres, and carry *kapas* or cotton to Muslim hamlets. They weigh the spun yarn, and pay for it; they repair the charkhas, supply parts, prepare the spinners' a/c, and give *kapas* or cotton as required. They (the Hindus) thus render such splendid brotherly service to their Muslim sisters. There is such regard and respect between the Hindu workers and Muslim spinners, weavers, and their families, that none can ever perceive or feel that they are divided by their religions. They talk and act as though they are of one race—Bengali—and of one brotherhood—of humanity. Verily, if the charkha is pushed on in other parts of the country as assiduously and amiably as is done by Satish Babu's 'boys', much of the present tension amongst Hindus and Muslims will diminish, and Heaven helping, will vanish.

Over-production?

The reader will have noticed in Mr. Bharucha's report Dr. Ray's difficulty in finding purchasers for his khadi. The same complaint is lodged by Dr. Hardikar from Karnatak. I have already referred in an early issue to the stock lying idle in the Punjab. As Gujarat must stop buying much from Andhra, even Andhra may complain of over-production. The same thing applies to

almost every khadi-producing province. And yet the whole stock of khadi throughout India will not be more than twenty lakhs at the outside. Compare this with crores of rupees worth of foreign stock. Is it not a sad commentary on our work and the patriotism of monied men? One millionaire can buy out the whole of the present stock of khadi and sell at cheap rates to the poor. Yes, even a patriotic mill-owner can do so without hurting himself. Tens of thousands of men and women flock to our meetings. They can buy up all the khadi in one single day without having to pauperize themselves. Public institutions can make their cloth purchases in khadi without losing anything or much. Bombay has always been to the fore in such matters. If Bombay willed it, its immense population can buy out the present surplus without much hurt to her two million pockets. But I do not wish to grumble. The fault is not the people's. In any event, it is not yet proved. It lies at the workers' doors. We must organize sales as we organize production. The formula being each province to sell what it produces. At the same time each province must produce to its fullest capacity and send the surplus, if any, to the chief towns such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, etc., which will not themselves be effective producing centres. All this means organizing and thinking out. Each province must fix its own minimum sales. It would not do for spinners and workers of a province themselves to be clad in foreign or mill cloth and send their manufactures for sales. *The first step towards such organization is undoubtedly the full working of the spinning resolution of the A.I.C.C.*

Non-representatives

It is, therefore, a matter of joy that the various provinces are endorsing the spinning resolution and organizing spinning in their own provinces. Let me hope that no province will be found wanting. But I hope no one thinks that, because the spinning resolution does not apply to him or her, he or she need not spin or send yarn to the All-India Khadi Board. The resolution is mandatory and the A.I.C.C. cannot issue mandates to the whole nation. But if it is obligatory on Congress representatives, it follows that all the other Congress members, i.e., the electors who have paid 4 as. and even others should impose the obligation on themselves and make it a point of honour to send as much hand-spun yarn as possible to the All-India Khadi Board Secretary or to the provincial representative for despatch to the central organization. If the whole nation, irrespective of parties, co-operates, it will be found that we can banish foreign cloth and with it pauperism from our midst in an incredibly

short space of time. Nothing is so easy as the organization of this khadi work and if we cannot as a nation organize this simple thing, we shall organize nothing else that is constructive on any large national scale.

Cloth or Steel

Acharya Ray has issued a pathetic appeal to the nation. He says in effect that, if it is good to pay one crore and a half annually for protecting steel, surely it is infinitely better to protect khadi cloth by paying a much larger bounty.

Dr. Ray says:

> But of the two industries, cloth and steel, which is of greater importance? Our cloth industry died on account of unfair foreign competition. If protection is to be given, which industry has the strongest claim for receiving State protection? Our people are in dire want of the primary necessities of life, food and clothes. Could not our hand-spinning industry be protected by duties, from competition with imported cotton goods? But the Government would not do it. India cannot do it until she has swaraj. What the Government would not do the popular will can accomplish. It is for us to say that we refuse to wear imported cotton goods. It is for us to say that we shall use only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi and thereby stop a drain of sixty crores of rupees annually. It is for us to protect our cloth industry against foreign competition.
>
> From my experience I can say that hand-spinning has come to stay—if our countrymen will out of their patriotism bear with coarse product and costlier stuff for only a few years. I would ask you who are unconsciously paying one and a half crores to Tata steel, to consciously pay something for revival of an industry in comparison with which even Tata's steel industry is a pigmy. Our patriotism must carry us through to success during the earlier days of our struggle—till only the infant industry is established on a sure footing.

Opium in Assam

The opium inquiry committee appointed by the Assam P.C.C. has already commenced work and examined several witnesses at Sibsagar. Many witnesses were leading men of the district and chosen from all parties. They unanimously advocated total prohibition. An experienced witness said that it was "a preposterous suggestion that opium has any prophylactic action against kala-azar or malaria". The largest number of deaths, the witness added, were among opium-eaters at Angera Khowa, a village in Sibsagar. Some witnesses gave the interesting information that temperance workers were harassed and prosecuted for "the offence

of asking people not to smoke or eat opium". I hope that the committee will not be satisfied with general statements, but will collect comparative statistics about opium cultivation, opium shops, opium dens. There should also be medical evidence as to the effect of opium on the population of Assam. There should be evidence showing the effect likely to be produced by complete prohibition of opium. The report to be of use must be a veritable mine of information.

A.I.K.B.'s Complaint

For the past six months the All-India Khadi Board has been asking for certain monthly returns about khadi from the provinces in order to ascertain the progress of khadi. Publicity is of the greatest importance for stimulating production as well as sale. The Board, however, says that the only provinces that send at all regular reports are Tamil Nadu, Utkal, Punjab, Bihar and Maharashtra. Kerala has just commenced. Maharashtra figures are incomplete. From some provinces the reports received are irregular. Delhi and Burma have not even formed Khadi Boards. This is truly deplorable. The headquarters should have full figures as to all Congress activities in all its departments. Khadi is the most important of all. The provinces are, therefore, naturally expected to be up to date and accurate in the information they give. It is for instance necessary to know the quantity of khadi production in each province and in each district both under the Congress auspices and outside. Similarly, it is necessary to know the sales both local and outside the provinces, also their imports of khadi. Such work should be done with clock-work regularity. The central office should not have to send reminders. The word organization has no meaning apart from attention to every necessary detail from top to bottom and the harmonious working of all its parts.

Young India, 24-7-1924

232. LETTER TO A FRIEND

SABARMATI,
July 24, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I understand the difficulty raised by you. But I still retain the opinion that my not being President will serve the cause better. Why should khadi suffer because I do not preside? There was no difficulty at Calcutta, Nagpur or Ahmedabad. Why have any fear about Belgaum? Think of the effect on the country of my withdrawal after rejection of my programme. As you must have noticed, Maulana Shaukat Ali has sent me a wire. What is at the back of his mind I do not know. Probably he will be here to discuss the point. I simply want to do what is right.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy : .N. 9000

233. LETTER TO VITHALBHAI J. PATEL

SABARMATI,
July 24, 1924

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant. I understand that it will be equally convenient for the Corporation if I fix the date at the end of August for the receipt of the Corporation address. Subject, however, to your convenience, I suggest 30th August for receiving the address. Will you please let me know the time when and the place at which I must present myself for the ceremony?

I am,
Yours faithfully,

V. J. PATEL, ESQ., BAR-AT-LAW
PRESIDENT, MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8811

234. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Ashadh Krishna 8 [July 24 1924][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter.

I have not yet been able to visualize how the spirit of non-violence can lead to the commission of violence. I have thought about this deeply. I also believe that, so long as we do not ourselves transcend the [three] *gunas*[2], we cannot think about this thing to our full satisfaction in all its bearings.

Swami Anand has sent you the bill for *Young India*, etc.

I intend to go to Delhi, but it will take some time yet. I very much wish I could go right now, but I am not yet ready to undertake physical exertion.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6018. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

235. TELEGRAM TO MAHOMED ALI[3]

[July 26, 1924][4]

YOUR WIRE. ANANDANAND WANDERING BETWEEN BOMBAY AND AHMEDABAD. EXPEDITE DESPATCH MACHINERY.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 9003

[1] From the reference to the bill for *Young India* it is evident that this was written after the letter to the addressee dated June 26, 1924. In 1924, *Ashadh Krishna* 8 fell on July 24.

[2] The three *gunas* (mental states) are *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (restlessness) and *tamas* (torpidity).

[3] This was in reply to Mahomed Ali's telegram of July 25, which read: "Arrived this morning. Await your suggestions. Shall post my impressions and information soon. When may I expect my press. Waiting."

[4] In his letter to Mahomed Ali dated July 27, Gandhiji says, "You must have got both my wires yesterday." Evidently this is one of them.

236. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

July 26, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

Here are my answers to your questions:[1]

(1) In my opinion it is open to No-changers to carry on active propaganda against C[ouncil-] entry, but I consider it to be highly inadvisable in the interest of the national cause.

(2) It is equally open to the other party, if one commences. But I would advise restraint to both.

(5) I am not now[2], and am not likely at any time, to 'work' for a majority unless work includes also spinning and[3] such like.

(6) Whatever the No-changers may or may not do, I certainly think that it is open to the Swarajists to consolidate their power by every honourable means.

(7a) They should be all executive bodies. I do not know[4] what they are today. As I have told you, I would like to suggest amendment of the constitution to make the Congress machinery more effective.

(7b) I am certain that if the Congress is to do effective work, its executives should be in the hands of those who fully believe in and carry out the Congress programme for the time being.

I certainly think that M. M. Ali[5] should answer your questions. I am to be in Bombay 30th August. I hope you received my card[6] in reply to your last letter.[7]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] These questions were initially put to Mahomed Ali and later sent to Gandhiji with the letter dated July 25; *vide* Appendix IV(A). A draft of Gandhiji's replies on the *questionnaire* itself is available in S.N. 9002.

[2] The draft here has 'working'.

[3] The draft has 'or'.

[4] This was missing in the draft, obviously a slip.

[5] Maulana Mahomed Ali

[6] This is not available.

[7] For Motilal Nehru's reply to this, *vide* Appendix IV(B).

237. LETTER TO J. B. PETIT

SABARMATI,
July 26, 1924

DEAR MR. PETIT,

I have purposely delayed sending reply to your letter of the 17th ultimo which you kindly sent in reply to mine. I was hoping to find out some details of a letter I wrote to you before I was imprisoned. But I cannot trace it. Mr. Chaturvedi recollects the letter, but no trace can be found. The reference in your letter is to a letter Mr. Benarasidas wrote. Mr. Benarasidas has a distinct recollection of your having promised in reply to my letter half the amount that was being paid here. I venture to suggest that Mr. Benarasidas does not need to be a whole-time officer. There is not work enough for him. As it is, he being an expert, he does more than most of us. He has literary obligations which bring him no fees and which he cannot do in Bombay without much cost. As you know, he is a simple-living man. He is, therefore, able to do here four times as much work in value as he can do in Bombay. Three-fourths of his time is devoted to overseas work. It is therefore in my opinion fit that funds specially earmarked for the purpose are utilized for his work. It is cheaper for the Association to pay for his work done from here than to have him in Bombay and pay a heavy salary. Of course, he can be sent for whenever his services are required there.

Before I ask you to place my letter before the committee, I would like, if I can, to convince you that the position suggested by me is the correct one. At the time of sending your reply, will you please mind sending me names of the members of the committee so as to enable me to place my view before them too.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 9978

238. LETTER TO W. POTON

July 26, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. The current issue of *Y.I.* gives my considered opinion on opium.[1] If the whole of the opium traffic was stopped today and sale restricted to medicinal use only, I know there will be no agitation against it worth the name. From the moral standpoint, there is no defence of the Indian opium policy.

I am keeping fairly good health. Thanks.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MR. W. POTON
111A, RUSSA ROAD
CALCUTTA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

239. LETTER TO C. F. WELLER

SABARMATI,
July 26, 1924

DEAR MR. WELLER,

I have been unable before today to overtake your kind letter of 22nd May. I thank you for it and the offer of your home. I must however resist the temptation. I must make no other experiment till the one I am now making can be demonstrated to have succeeded. Today I can make no such claim for it. On the contrary my method seems to have dissatisfied many of my co-workers. I dare not transfer my activity at the present moment to any other place. If the plant I am tending here grows into a hardy tree, all else is easy. I would, therefore, ask you and other friends, instead of tempting me away from the present field of labour, to help me to success by studying the problem and, in

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 24-7-1924.

so far as it may commend itself to them, by cultivating world opinion in its favour.

With my kind regards to you and yours,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

CHARLES F. WELLER, ESQ.
LEAGUE OF NEIGHBOURS
BROAD AND WEST GRAND STREET
ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

240. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Ashadh Vad 10 [July 26, 1924][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Cast aside all your mental worries, take proper treatment and improve your health thoroughly while you are there. I am making arrangements for [your stay at] Hajira. Gangabehn writes to say that she will come here on Monday. Radha is not able to take enough food.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 451. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] The postmark bears this date.

241. MY NOTES

Acharya Ray Spins Daily

Acharya Ray is now over sixty years old. But he has started spinning. He writes:

> As a matter of fact, the music of the spinning-wheel has proved a solace to my mind. My faith in khadi grows day by day, and as my khadi work increases, the spinning-wheel has come to be a perennial fountain sustaining my enthusiasm.

Thus if very busy veterans like Acharya Ray have begun to spin, why should not young men and women with lots of leisure do so too? It is easy to understand the source of Acharya Ray's enthusiasm. For many years he has been at the job of bringing relief to famine-stricken people of Bengal. He has realized in the course of it that mere charity saps the character of the famine-stricken and hence does more harm than good to them. What sort of work can be given to thousands of men and women to enable them to earn their livelihood? What else but the spinning-wheel can be so all-embracing? It was not difficult for his keen and well-meaning intellect to discover this.

Resignations

A number of office-bearers of the Congress Committee at Hubli have tendered their resignations on account of the A.I.C.C. resolution. This situation has frightened some of us, but I regard it as a good omen, because these resignations imply respect for A.I.C.C. resolutions. Those organizations which have no sanctions like the Government depend for their functioning on the respect they command from their members. I did know that there were many office-bearers who did not believe in the fivefold boycott or who did not practise it. Hence, I had suggested a resolution calling on them to quit office. If those office-bearers have thought it fit to quit and that, too, without any resentment, it will benefit them and the community. By taking this needed step of handing in their resignations, they have proved their own worth and have purified the Committee. And yet the public will not be deprived of their services. If they have resigned out of anger, they stand to lose, because they are likely to forfeit the love of the people which they have earned. But from

what I hear, all of them have resigned with goodwill. The public will continue to be served by them. The good example that Shri Gangadharrao [Deshpande] has set not only to Karnatak but also to the whole of India makes us hope that it will be followed by all those who have resigned and yet continue to serve the public. Gujarat, of course, has before it the example of Shri Kalidas Zaveri. His resignation does not mean that he will cease to serve the public. Those who continue as office-bearers in the Congress even though they cannot comply with its resolutions deceive the public and themselves too. No organization can ever be run that way. How can they who themselves wear foreign cloth get others to boycott it? How can those who continue their own legal practice make others give it up? How can those who get their own children educated in Government schools conduct national schools? If those who believe in the triple boycott and practise it have no capacity to run the Congress organization, of what use will swaraj be? And if there is none who can practise the boycott, how can the programme of boycott be allowed to continue even as a sentiment? A thing can continue to exist even as a sentiment only if it is practised by a few at any rate. Something comes to be fixed as a symbol of sentiment in the hope that some day it will be a reality. If no one translates it into action, it will be regarded not as a sentiment but as hypocrisy. It is not a small thing that the clearing up that is being done at present rules out hypocrisy; hence, viewing the matter from whatever angle we like, we shall reach only one conclusion—that the A.I.C.C. resolution and the resultant resignations are both to be welcomed.

What about Teachers?

But one headmaster of a primary school puts this question to me: "What should teachers do when the people in a village do not care for a national school and teachers starve without pay?" A very similar question was asked by a Bengali teacher and I have replied to it in *Young India*[1]. Let us consider the question a little further here. Abbas Saheb has asked me to consider the question in another way. He says: There are no schools at all in a number of villages; what should be done in their case? The reply to the first difficulty is simple. If there is dynamism in the teacher, he will somehow accomplish his work. A teacher works like a magnet. Children surround him and do not leave him alone

[1] *Vide* "The Plight of Teachers", 24-7-1924.

even for a moment. Separation from the teacher becomes unbearable to the pupils. Parents would never forsake such a teacher. If a teacher becomes rich, he is looked upon as a dishonest person, and if he starves, he is taken to be "dull". I advise the teacher correspondent to live by begging from door to door, but not to abandon his duty of teaching. Kaka[1] has written somewhere that teaching should not be regarded as a profession. That is certainly correct.

Moreover, education should cost less today. Children may study and also earn for their education. In olden times it used to be exactly so. A pupil used to go to a teacher with sacrificial fuel in his hand. This had two meanings. One, that it amounted to taking a vow that he would not be a burden on his preceptor, but would work to maintain his guru and himself. The second implication was that a pupil would ever be courteous. There is need of both these things even today. There are elements of both labour and courtesy in the spinning-wheel activity. The teacher concerned should teach his pupils all the processes in respect of cotton and make them spin beautiful yarn. While getting them to spin, he should sit in front of them and himself spin. Alongside this he should make them learn multiplication tables, make them memorize Sanskrit declensions, explain the meaning of verses, and narrate good historical stories. He should make the pupils' spinning activity interesting and instructive. When this is done, the children will not feel bored. I have proposed the use of *takli*[2]. Its use can ensure rapid performance.

Now let us consider Abbas Saheb's question. The readers of *Navajivan* may hardly be aware of the fact that, although knowledge of English may have increased in India, knowledge of the three R's has on the whole diminished. The number of village schools in India has dwindled in the last fifty years. That is to say, to the extent we middle-class people believe ourselves to have advanced, the children living in villages have lagged behind. As we in cities have prospered economically, the villages have suffered a decline. Likewise, while we have advanced educationally, the villages have had a set-back. Any statistician can prove that this is a true fact, terrible though it is. It has been found that, in Burma, almost all the children were literate before the advent of British rule there, because there was not a single village then without a rural school. Today the picture is being changed.

[1] D. B. Kalelkar, popularly known as Kaka or Kaka Saheb

[2] Spinning device

Rural schools are being destroyed and hence illiteracy has been growing.

Since our movement is chiefly concerned with the poor, to the extent that it spreads among them, their material condition and literacy will be promoted. The remedy is to seek out the teacher in every village and get him to run a school. He should teach, sitting under a tree. Hindu children should study in the premises of a temple; Muslim children in, those of a mosque. Once such a beginning is made, a full-fledged school for both can be set up in course of time. No doubt, there are many difficulties in this, but our ability will be tested precisely in removing them. We must create that much consciousness and that much interest in education among the villages. All these things are implicit in the spinning-wheel movement. The district and taluka committees have to become alert and undertake this task.

Kheda District

The competition that is going on in Gujarat in respect of the spinning programme deserves to be welcomed. The Kheda District Congress Committee has resolved to turn out 5,000 yards of yarn a month, and having decided to get the above yarn spun by not less than 500 men and women, it has accordingly apportioned the quota among the units of talukas[1] and mahals[2]. I hope the people of Kheda district will not rest satisfied with doing only this much. Our ultimate demand is for half an hour's labour on the part of each one among lakhs of people. Hence, while congratulating the Kheda District Congress Committee, I give this warning too that I regard their promise to procure 500 spinners as an earnest of securing many more, which is certainly not beyond Kheda's capacity. I hope that, like the Kheda District Congress Committee, other committees also will take the necessary steps in this regard.

Muslim Khadi Committee

Shri Sayyad Hussain Urezi sends the following list[3] for publication:

I congratulate Maulana Azad Subani and the Muslim brethren of Ahmedabad on setting up this [khadi] committee. Khadi propaganda in India has certainly slackened, but the Muslims appear generally to have given up khadi altogether. I have heard that there was hardly any Muslim to be seen wearing

[1] & [2] Divisions and sub-divisions of a district

[3] Not reproduced here

khadi on the last Id Day. The khadi committee referred to here can, if it so wishes, do a lot of work. Spinning is such an activity that both Hindus and Muslims can take equal part in it. In respect of some crafts, Muslims lead the world and weaving is one of them. The Dacca muslin used to be woven by Muslims alone. That is exactly why the weavers bore the sweet and dignified name—*noorbaf*[1]. No one can compete with them in *jari* work. Gold or silver embroidery thread made by the famed weavers of Patna is known throughout the world. Even today artisans who do fine embroidery work are Muslims only. Nowadays they weave foreign yarn. They alone used formerly to weave fine hand-spun yarn of one hundred count. They also used to weave Dacca *shubnum* or khadi which was fine and bright like dew. The revival of the same embroidery work is implied in this khadi movement. There are thousands of *noorbafs* who have abandoned their vocation; they can now start earning their livelihood by doing this khadi work. Even today the Muslim sisters of Vijapur spin fine yarn. If they so decide, they can spin the finest yarn. This committee can do a lot of work if it strives hard. I take it for granted that every member of the committee wears pure khadi; also that every member will spin at least 2,000 yards of yarn every month. If the committee desires success, some of its members ought to devote all their time to this work. I wish success to the committee.

Student Ganpat

The reader will be pleased to know that student Ganpat has returned home.[2] I hope he will never give up his efforts to seek a remedy for the injustice which he has noticed. If he continues his search for it, he will come to realize that swaraj alone is the remedy. Now, the means of winning swaraj is the spinning-wheel. Hence, while prosecuting his studies, Ganpat should acquire complete knowledge about the spinning-wheel activity, spin regularly every day and send the yarn to the Provincial Congress Committee. He will come to discover other means also in the course of spinning activity.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-7-1924

[1] Luminous ones among weavers
[2] *Vide* "Enlightened or Half-baked?", 20-7-1924.

242. RELIGION ON TRIAL

A cloud is hanging over the national school of Wadhwan. Whether it disappears or grows in size and bursts over the school, this is a moment of trial for the latter.

I think the question of admitting *Antyaja* children to the school was raised even at the time of its establishment and that the Governing Board had then decided that they too could be admitted. The money which was donated towards a building for that school was also given on the understanding that *Antyajas* would be admitted to it.

Now that the time has come for admitting *Antyaja* children to it, all sorts of difficulties seem to have arisen. Even if, on *Antyaja* children being admitted to the school, some members of the Board leave it, parents withdraw their children from the school and some teachers resign, even if all this happens, the teacher and the parent to whom their religion is dear should not swerve an inch from the path of duty.

In my humble view, there can be no two opinions on what dharma requires in this situation. It requires that the original pledge must be kept. Not a single new factor has arisen which may put us in doubt as to what our dharma is on this occasion. *Antyajas* have as much claim on the school as the others. If we were among those who would appeal to a court, there is only one decision the latter could give, and it is that the teachers and the Governing Board were bound to admit *Antyaja* children to the school. Members of the management or teachers who objected to this would be committing a breach of trust with the donors.

For followers or sympathizers of the Congress, abolition of untouchability has become a basic national principle. The issue has been before the people since 1920, and no one has had the courage to propose a change in the principle we have adopted. The Vidyapith[1] risked its very existence in order to uphold it. Workers who were collecting funds for the Tilak Swaraj Fund let go, for the same reason, donations which had been actually promised. I should like the religious-minded members of the Governing Board, the teachers and other citizens of Wadhwan to be ready to follow this principle and uphold dharma.

[1] Gujarat Vidyapith, National University at Ahmedabad founded by Gandhiji in 1920

The citizens of Wadhwan are wise. They are generous. They are not bigots, but are true lovers of religion—this is the impression they have always produced on me. In that town, *Antyajas* should not be despised. Let its national school welcome *Antyaja* pupils, encourage them, and let the other parents look upon it as dharma to send their children to a school attended by *Antyajas*. I request them to consider this matter with a mature judgment and exclusively from a moral point of view and see that the pledge once taken is kept.

The general rules of the school can be changed, but no one can alter the principle on which the school has been founded. That school has been dedicated to a certain cause, and the dedication is as unalterable as the scroll of Destiny. The utmost that can be done is this. Those parents who have a religious objection can withdraw their children. But the members of the Governing Board or the teachers have no justification at all to leave. They should be determined to run the school even if it has only one pupil, an *Antyaja*. In that lies the prestige of the school, the teachers, the members of the Governing Board and of Wadhwan.

Indeed, there will be many such difficulties in the fight for swaraj, for dharma! We have decided to use only two means in this struggle: truth and non-violence. If the principle on which the school was founded is altered, it will mean abandoning truth and non-violence. It is the essential teaching of all religions that one may sacrifice one's wealth, honour, family or life, but never truth, which on this occasion means our pledge, and non-violence, which here means love for *Antyajas*. In the measure we fail in this, we fail in dharma. Religion will not be in danger if all children leave the school, nor will the cause of swaraj suffer nor Wadhwan be disgraced. All the three, however, will be disgraced if *Antyaja* children are turned away out of fear that other children may leave.

I believe that it should be quite unnecessary now to prove that the practice of untouchability is a great sin. Members of the Congress and lovers of swaraj can have no doubt about it at all.

It is my humble prayer to the citizens, to the members of the Governing Board and the teachers of Wadhwan that they keep their pledge. May God grant them the necessary strength.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-7-1924

243. NEED FOR CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAIL

In order to observe the spinning vow thoroughly, it is necessary to pay attention to the smallest details. There is a saying in English, "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves." One who is not careful about a pie will never save a rupee. This is true about all big undertakings. If small details are neglected, big tasks suffer. If, in a big machine, a small nail is not in its place or has become loose, or when a very small particle is sticking somewhere, it very often comes to a halt.

Our capacity to manage our affairs under swaraj will be measured by our ability to pay attention to details. Our vow of spinning will give us that ability. That spinning should be done regularly, the yarn produced should be collected and registered with the Provincial Congress Committee, that from there the record should go to the All-India Congress Committee and the figure noted, that the yarn should be collected into a central pool and then woven into khadi and that, finally, the khadi should be sold—this is easily said, but to do it all we shall need many kinds of capacity and great many workers.

The village should manage its own work; the taluka should look after the villages, the district after the talukas and the province after the districts and above them all should be the Khadi Board.

Where everyone understands his duty and is competent enough in doing it, things will run smoothly. But where people do not understand their responsibility, the Provincial Congress Committees will have to look after everything.

A good stock of spinning-wheels should be maintained, they should be repaired and kept in working condition.

It should be seen that spindles are serviceable and straight.

The leather supporting the spindles should be maintained in such a condition that it easily fits in.

Mals[1] should be provided for.

Cotton should be stocked.

Cotton should be ginned, carded and turned into slivers and supplied where required and, thereafter, the yarn produced should be collected.

[1] Cotton-cord passing round wheels moving together

One who takes interest in this work will have time neither for speeches nor for criticism, nor for ill will towards others. Such a one will remain occupied in his own work.

The ideal is that everyone should provide himself with his own spinning-wheel, procure the cotton he will require, card it, make slivers from it, blow water on the yarn spun, take it off, wind it properly and, together with his name and information about the count of the yarn, its weight and its length in yards neatly set down, have it packed and forwarded every month to the Provincial Congress Committee.

But till all spinners have become trained for this work, the Provincial Congress Committee will have to take the responsibility for most of it and for that purpose one or more spinning experts will also have to be engaged for some time.

If we get men and women spinners in large numbers, we do not have enough spinning-wheels for them, and it will take some time to get them in sufficient number. To get them, moreover, will require adequate funds. When we took up spinning, Shri Laxmidas[1] introduced the *takli*. I had a good laugh when I first saw it in his hands. But I showed no curiosity about it. Next I saw it in the hands of Shri Mathuradas in Juhu. I felt inclined to learn that art, and I did learn it a little. But ever since the thing has remained in my mind. It costs at the most two annas. Not much time is required to make it and it can produce yarn half as fast as an ordinary spinning-wheel. It is infinitely easy to handle. It can be carried everywhere. One can spin uniform and well-twisted yarn on it. Even today we see Brahmins using this small wheel to turn out yarn for their holy thread. Many schoolboys call on me. In reply to my questions, some of them say that they have no spinning-wheel and others that there is no one to teach them spinning. Some school buildings are so small that they do not even have room for spinning-wheels. In such circumstances, the little *takli* is a very useful article. Anyone who learns to spin on it will find it easy to produce yarn on a spinning-wheel. Hence spinning can be learnt on the *takli* itself and it is easy to turn out daily a hundred yards of yarn on that beautiful but simple contrivance. I hope that persons or institutions that do not have spinning-wheels will use this portable wheel and spin.

There is a profound significance in the proverb, "A dam is built pebble by pebble and drop by drop fills the lake." A

[1] Laxmidas Asar, who had dedicated himself to the cause of khadi

single drop is of little consequence. One pebble cannot become a dam to stop water. But we know the miracle worked by many pebbles and many drops of water. A like miracle will result from many people spinning regularly, though only for a little while. Just as a building is erected not by dumping bricks at one place, but only by arranging them properly, so also durable khadi can be made from yarn properly spun and properly arranged through weaving.

Ordinarily, a small number of farmers produce a large quantity of food. At the time of the Great War in Europe, England's food supply had run short. What was produced in the fields was not sufficient. Potato was the easiest of crops to raise. Hence every citizen was required to sow potatoes in the 20-or 25-yard courtyard of his. On the potatoes produced in one courtyard, even one family could hardly subsist; but the help rendered through potatoes raised in thousands of courtyards proved invaluable. Likewise, a very large number of Red Cross badges and shirts were required. The tailors alone could not produce them. Hence even people who had never handled a needle were pressed into service for this work. Models were made available for the novices. Even instructors were provided for them. In this way, lakhs of Red Cross badges and shirts were got prepared free through thousands of volunteers who could not join active service and who had some time to spare. The value of one man's labour is nothing, but labour of the same kind undertaken by large numbers proved of the utmost value then. Lawyers, students, commission agents, men and women—all joined in that work and were proud of doing so. Readers probably do not know that Sarojini Devi[1], and I too, had joined in this work. We did not feel that it was tailor's work. The nobles, too, did not consider it below their status. When I see today any educated person ridiculing the work of spinning, I recall my experience during the War. Comparing the present with that time, I see that it is more necessary for everyone to spin in order to extinguish the great fire that is raging in the country than it was then for people to prepare Red Cross badges or shirts during that terrible War.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-7-1924

[1] Sarojini Naidu

244. MY LOIN-CLOTH

A Muslim brother writes:[1]

I have reproduced this letter as it is. Believing that other Muslim brethren, as also some Hindus, may have felt the same doubt as this friend, I venture to give a reply to the letter. I receive many letters about myself, but I do not discuss them in *Navajivan*, thinking that doing so will serve no useful purpose. But I feel it necessary to point out the many errors which this letter contains. The critic has correctly understood the reason for my wearing the loin-cloth. It cannot be laid aside except by securing swaraj. It will go when men and women of India secure swaraj and help me to discard it, or God may make me such an invalid that I could not do without more clothes. When I started wearing the loin-cloth, I did fear that it would be labelled as indecent. But having regard to the direction which my life had taken, I thought it right to run the risk of being considered indecent in dress. I am always ready to do the utmost for my Muslim friends. My need of them is very great. I had even discussed the matter with a Muslim friend before effecting the change in my dress. He approved of my idea, and that gave me more courage. After an experience of three years, I do not at all regret the change I effected, but on the contrary feel daily happier with it.

I wish to be in tune with the life of the poorest of the poor among Indians. I know that I can have a *darshan* of God in no other way. I want to see Him face to face. I have become impatient for the experience. I shall not be blessed with the vision until I have made myself the poorest of the poor. It is painful to me to eat or to dress as long as the poor do not have enough to eat or enough to cover their bodies with. Had God not created me weak, I would have introduced more drastic changes in my life. My critic can have no idea of the skeletons who stalk the country. To have it, he should repair to the remotest villages and live among the people there.

The correspondent will not get, even in three or four hundred years, the dress which he desires for the people of the country. He should know that crores of people in India do not get even a loin-cloth to wear. They move about only with a

[1] The letter is not translated here.

langoti. There are crores who have not had even a look at a pair of sandals. They do not even feel the need for them. How can these poor people afford a long shirt with a collar? Who will give them a cap? If we would wear so many garments, we cannot clothe the poor. But it is our duty to dress them first and then dress ourselves, to feed them first and then feed ourselves. This critic thinks about clothes. Let me ask him, in all humility, when the poverty-stricken people of this country do not get enough even to eat, how can we talk of dress reform?

Now about decency. The term decency has more than one meaning. It does not mean the same thing everywhere. What is decent in the West may be indecent in the East. Some of the styles of dressing prevalent in the West have been considered indecent in the East. In America, I would certainly be jailed. Narayan Hemchandra[1] was locked up in a prison for wearing a dhoti. My mother felt unhappy to see us brothers wearing trousers. She thought we were not fully dressed in them. Innumerable Hindus do not look upon the loin-cloth as an indecent dress at all. The sadhus wear only a *langoti*, but are not, for that reason, looked upon as uncivilized.

In my view, there is no indecency at all in being scantily dressed. Clothes are necessary only for the protection of the body. From the point of view of this critic, the shame which is there in wearing too many clothes is not to be found in the loin-cloth of a mendicant like me. If we but think of man's body as it is, we shall see no reason at all to be attached to it. This bag of bones can bear being looked at only when dressed in all sorts and styles of clothing. I cite only one example to show that this view is correct. We have never heard of anyone having fallen in love with a corpse. The object of attachment is the indwelling soul. Why, then, give so much thought to the body ? Why all this adornment?

Sisters come to bless me with their *darshan*, love me and give their blessings. There are both Hindus and Muslims among them. I am sure they do not come to look at my body at all. I have never felt that they ever watched it. This is but right. A man or a woman should never look at the body of his or her friend. If one happens to do so unwittingly, one should immediately take one's eyes off it. One is free to look at another's face only. A man of

[1] A linguist and scholar from Gujarat whom Gandhiji met in England; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. I, Ch. XXII.

self-restraint like Lakshman[1] had seen only Sita's toes, for he used to salute her feet. Hence, when sisters come to bless me, I never feel embarrassed in their presence because of my loin-cloth. I only pray for their goodwill. I need much help from them. I get some, but it is still too little. When Hindu and Muslim sisters have adopted the spinning-wheel and come to look upon khadi as their adornment, I shall feel that I have got all I wanted. I shall then certainly please my correspondent by wearing a dhoti and a long shirt with a collar, for I believe that, when the women have fallen in love with khadi, swaraj will have been won. Meanwhile, the correspondent should be kind to me and to those like me who wear a loin-cloth and, even if he regards the loin-cloth as indecent, should look upon people who wear it as his brethren, overlooking their indecency.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-7-1924

245. INVIOLABLE PLEDGE

These words were used for the first time at the time of the mill-hands' strike of 1917[2]. The workers used to parade the streets with a flag bearing these words; they got exhausted and were on the point of giving in. But God saved their honour. A compromise was reached. I have not, however, taken up the pen to write a history of that strike.

I only wish to remind Gujarat of its pledge, and cite the mill-workers' pledge merely as an example. So far, the steps we planned to take for securing swaraj were of the nature of collective action and, therefore, no one was fully conscious of his own responsibility. One could say that one had done one's duty towards the Congress by paying one's subscription of four annas. Now the circumstances have changed, and everyone is required to give half an hour every day for the sake of swaraj. Let no one think that the Congress resolution applies only to elected office-bearers. For them, of course, it is in the nature of an injunction, but every thoughtful person who has the good of the country at heart should follow it. It is the duty of every man, woman and child to give half an hour to spinning for the sake of the country. This is the earnest appeal of the Congress and everyone should take a firm pledge to respond to it.

[1] Younger brother of Rama, the hero of *Ramayana*
[2] The Ahmedabad mill-hands' strike took place in 1918; *vide* Vol. XIV.

Any sort of yarn will not do; it must be good, well-twisted and uniform. Its quality should improve day by day.

It was a simple matter when one paid some money and had to do nothing else. It was even easier to make speeches. To enrol others was also, comparatively speaking, easy. But to put in regularly, daily without fail, half an hour's honest labour for the sake of the people may seem difficult. If we but think about the matter, however, this is the easiest thing to do, for there is no waste of time in it and no cause whatever for disappointment. There is no need to flatter anyone. Everyone who loves the country should feel that giving half an hour for the country is no sacrifice at all.

But a friend feels that some will, for the first one or two months, give yarn spun by themselves, as required by the rule, but will by and by tire of doing so. I hope this fear will prove groundless. I do hope that everyone who has taken the pledge will keep it.

I am told that there is keen competition in Gujarat. There is no one who thinks of giving a mere three thousand yards. All are keen on spinning more. This is commendable spirit if only it will last.

If this pledge is honoured, those who at present ridicule spinning will themselves take to it.

If the pledge is fully acted upon, I have no doubt that such expressions of despair as "It will not be possible to produce fine yarn in Gujarat" and "Spinning will not pay in Gujarat" will be heard no more and we shall start spinning fine yarn in Gujarat. Not only that, but khadi will cease being dear and become cheap. The people who have, at present, no confidence in their power will come to have it.

Gujarat took the lead in non-co-operation. It can lead in the final step to success. We have to save ourselves from one danger. Among the charges against non-co-operation, one is that of arrogance. It is assumed that non-co-operators have got a licence to use harsh language about co-operationists; the latter have got the impression that non-co-operators believe that being non-co-operators has placed them above the others. We should prove that this charge is unjustified. Those who spin should not criticize others who do not spin, but should win them over through humility. They should not invite only those who are connected with the Congress, but should appeal even to co-operationists to spin. If one appeals to lawyers in the right manner, they will probably give half an hour of their time to spinning. Others also would do as much. Even those who do not believe in khadi will not be obstinate and refuse to spin for

half an hour. Everyone, probably, will believe that at any rate spinning will not harm the country.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-7-1924

246. A DENIAL

A report about some *Vania* having attacked an *Antyaja* on Petlad Railway Station had appeared in the *Navajivan* some time ago. A *Vaishnava* gentleman writes to say that it was found on inquiry that the report was without foundation. I publish this refutation not because I believe that the incident may not have occurred. Personally I do not accept the denial. So long as we do not get the name and other particulars of the victim and have not seen him, how can anyone decide that the attack never took place? Even though all the people in Petlad may assert, and truthfully, that they did not see the attack, it may have taken place all the same. In my humble view, it is our duty to build up public opinion against such attacks; we should do this instead of denying that the incident occurred, for we know that similar incidents do occur and we should, therefore, believe that this one also is likely to have occurred.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 27-7-1924

247. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
July 27, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

In my opinion, you should enter into correspondence with the Government and ascertain the reason for the prohibition and say that, if anything can be pointed out to the committee as really objectionable, your committee would be prepared to delete the passages. If the Government return an unsatisfactory reply, you should intimate to them that the words will not be withdrawn from circulation.

The Government are not likely to bother the children and, even if they do, the only thing they can do is to remove the books from the children. The latter may be advised then not to mind and hand over the books to the police. I do not think there is any other

penalty. Please look up the law and let me know. I feel that no matter how much we may have become demoralized, we may not shirk a battle that may be given to us. We need not take up aggressive civil disobedience, we may not take up mass civil disobedience; but we must face that which comes our way and tests us. Don't you think so? How to give battle will be a question for you to decide as the situation develops.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Pray do not worry about my health. It is all right and answers my purpose. You must be resourceful enough to mend the charkha. For the handle all you need is an iron inset. Wood always non-co-operates with iron and gives in. Immediately you fix in an iron ring, you will find it will work all right. Please note that mere nails will not do. No part of the handle should have friction with the iron axle.

Yours,
M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

248. *LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI*

SABARMATI,
July 27, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Yours is a hard task. I often think of risking my health and running to Delhi. If you think I should do so, you have only to say the word. You must have got both my wires[1] yesterday. I would like you to make, if you will shoulder the burden, an exhaustive inquiry and publish your finding. I know you can act boldly. Spare neither the Hindus nor the Mussalmans whenever they may be in the wrong. Hear patiently all the sides, publicly invite them. Take their written evidence.

I am trying to hasten Anandanand. He is wandering between Ahmedabad and Bombay. He has to get machines to replace yours. It takes time to move these big things from place to place. He is now in Bombay negotiating a purchase. I shall see him probably

[1] Only one of these is available; *vide* "Telegram to Mahomed Ali", 26-7-1924.

tomorrow. I told him, immediately you mentioned the matter, to write to you from time to time and tell you what he was doing.

Pandit Motilalji sent me copy of the questions put by him to you and complained that you had not yet answered them. I got the letter yesterday. He asked me too to reply to his general questions, which I have done. If you have not yet replied, I would suggest your replying. Our strength must be in our work and only that.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MAULANA MAHOMED ALI
DELHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

249. LETTER TO BHAGWANDAS

July 27, 1924

DEAR BABU BHAGWANDAS,

I thank you for your letter. I assure you I am continually taxing myself as to how to end this wrangling. I know that there is room for both the *policies*. But, as you very properly say, they can only work like submarines and aeroplanes. Fields of action must be different. They will not then clash but help. I am seeking means of exit from the Congress without a fireworks display. In Mr. Tilak's own time, I had no difficulties in working along my own lines. And I know that I venerated him and that he did not dislike me and helped me whenever he could.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

BABU BHAGWANDASJI
SEVASHRAM, SIGRA
BENARES CANTT.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

250. LETTER TO DR. SATYAPAL

July 27, 1924

DEAR DR. SATYAPAL,

I have your letter. I am doing all I can about Delhi. My weak body stands in the way of my going to Delhi. If members resign because they will not spin, it is as well that they resign. If Congressmen believe in spinning, they must spin, if they do not let us drop khaddar from the Congress programme. About the peasants, if they are willing to go through the fire, much can be done for them.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. SATYAPAL
BRADLAUGH HALL
LAHORE

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

251. LETTER TO DR. CHIMANDAS J. JAGTIANI

July 27, 1924

MY DEAR CHIMANDAS,

I have your letter. You must have seen my argument in *Young India* showing why it is necessary to send half an hour's output to the Congress for the nation. You may spin for yourself. But you must spin for the nation too.

Pray do not worry about my health.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. CHIMANDAS
NIHARJUNGO PIR
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

252. *LETTER TO EMILY HOBHOUSE*

SABARMATI,
July 27, 1924

DEAR MISS HOBHOUSE[1],

Friends had preserved your letter of 8th December, '22. It was like meeting you to receive that letter. I never met Miss Adams.

I was quite happy in the Prison. I had as many books as I wanted so long as they were non-political.

I wonder if you ever read *Young India.* It would be a privilege to send it to you, if you would care to read it. How are you keeping body?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS EMILY HOBHOUSE
THE WARREN HOUSE ST. INES
CORNWALL

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

253. *LETTER TO KHUSHI RAM DARYANOMAL*

July 27, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I endeavour to uphold the cause of truth only. As for the *Mussalman*, I should advise the Hindus to ignore the thing entirely.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SETH KHUSHI RAM DARYANOMAL
"ZAMINDAR"
JACO[BA]BAD (SIND)

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] An Englishwoman of liberal views; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. IV, Ch. XL.

254. LETTER TO DHARNIDHAR PRASAD

July 27, 1924

DEAR DHARNIDHAR BABU,

I was glad to hear from you. I agree with you about working with separate organization. But am staying in just now for a separate organization or a practically unanimous Congress. I hope your domestic troubles will be soon over.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

BABU DHARNIDHAR PRASAD
P.O. SIRI (DHARBHANGA)

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

255. LETTER TO PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

July 27, 1924

DEAR DR. PATTABHI,

I did think of the Kalashala and expected to hear from you. I am now moving in the matter, but I may not be able to help you as early as you would like me to be. Of course, I may fail altogether. Do you contemplate help through the Congress? Is this Rs. 10,000 the last that you will need or would you have continually to rely upon help from outside the province? Give me all [information] you can to influence donors. Yes, spinning is infectious. One friend is trying to do 50,000 yards here all by himself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA
MACHLIPATNAM

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

256. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

ASHRAM,
July 27, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I thank you for your affectionate letter[1]. I would certainly have listened to you if you had not been the party to tell me that a certain very intimate friend of yours had, with high fever on, held on to his post in the Assembly and would not forsake his post in spite of medical advice. Even after the debate, he would not give himself rest. If you could not prevail with such an intimate friend, how should you with me? Example is better than precept, say so many copy-books. But really there is no cause for anxiety about me. It is true that I have lost weight to an alarming extent, but I cannot eat under great pressure of work. The strain of sitting itself during those meetings was great. If there were not so many calls on my time, I would certainly have jumped at your offer of the Ganges retreat, but the Delhi people are worrying me. I have many delicate problems in the Ashram. I would love to write to you about them, if I had the time to disburden myself and you the time to give a friendly ear. But I must desist. I wanted to write an important letter to you today, but I must not as I have some friends waiting for me. I shall try tomorrow. I would like you not to hesitate to write on business matters whenever you feel you have anything to say to me. I have written to Mahomed Ali asking him to send you a reply.[2] I have sent him copy of my answers to you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* Appendix IV(B).
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Mahomed Ali", 27-7-1924.

257. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI

SABARMATI,
July 27, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I had your wire from Itarsi. I am glad Mahomed Ali is in Delhi. I have wired[1] to him asking him as Congress President to investigate and publish a preliminary report. Hakimji wires saying accounts are most exaggerated. Anyway, if we can tackle the Delhi business in a business-like way, much trouble can be saved. I am myself eager to go early. My weak body prevents. But I do often think I should go in any event and be by Mahomed Ali's side. However, I restrain myself unless there is a clear call.

Why do you want me to be President of the Congress at Belgaum? Surely I shall influence people and proceedings whether I am President or not. My usefulness is gone if I cannot get the country to adopt H. M. Unity and the charkha as articles of national faith. If we don't get the expected response during the ensuing months regarding spinning and if we do not get Hindus and Mussalmans to come nearer, what should I do at Belgaum as President? As representing a stubborn minority, it is possible to do a lot. A superficial make-believe majority must hinder the movement.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This wire is not available.

258. LETTER TO NANABHAI ICHCHHARAM MASHRUWALA

Ashadh Vad 11 [July 27, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI NANABHAI,

I have your letter. It was Jamnadas Mehta[2] who told me. I will write to him and ask him. We need not worry about what people say. It is enough if we have done nothing wrong.

I hope you have stopped worrying. You must have received my previous letter.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

NANABHAI ICHCHHARAM, ESQ.
AKOLA
BERAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 4317. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

[1] The postal delivery stamp is dated July 29, 1924. *Ashadh Vad* 11 fell on July 27.

[2] Jamnadas Madhavji Mehta, barrister-at-law, and politician

259. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Ashadh Vad 11 [*July 27, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

My Magazine was received here. I shall write some other time about the extracts you have sent. It is an 'evergreen'[2] (find out and send me a Gujarati equivalent for it.). My health is good enough for my work. It is only when I know what work Abhechandbhai can do and what pay he expects that I can put him on to some job if I can think of any. I have already told them to put an errata list in *Y. I.* How nice it would have been if you had prepared one and sent it? You have once again left off doing that. Send me as many Gujarati words as you can for 'charity'[3] and 'colourless'[4]. What word can we use [for colourless] in "I have written a 'colourless' letter."?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Do you go to enquire about Malaviyaji's health? Do go on my behalf and let me know how it is.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6019. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] The reference to Abhechandbhai in the letter to the addressee, dated July 10, 1924, suggests that this was also written in the same year.

[2], [3] & [4] English words have been used in the original.

260. *TELEGRAM TO TRIVANDRUM CONGRESS RELIEF COMMITTEE*[1]

[On or after *July 30, 1924*]

PRESIDENT CONGRESS RELIEF COMMITTEE
TRIVANDRUM

DAMAGE BEYOND CONGRESS CAPACITY COPE SUGGEST AIDING GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS WHERE POSSIBLE. OTHERWISE INDIVIDUAL SILENT PERSONAL AID MOST VALUABLE AND SHOULD BE RENDERED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9005

261. *MORE ABOUT "VARNASHRAMA"*

The fair friend whose letter I reproduced in part in the issue of the 17th[2] with comments complains that I have not done justice to her by giving only part of her letter and omitting that which was inconvenient for my argument and challenges me to reproduce the whole of the letter. As I had no intention whatever of suppressing any part of her letter for the cause she mentions, I gladly place before the reader the whole of her letter and her comments on my remarks. As I have no desire to enter into any further discussion on the matter I have told her that hers shall be the last say.

Young India, 31-7-1924

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from the Secretary, Trivandrum Congress Committee, received on July 30, 1924, which read: "Tremendous floods in Kerala especially Travancore. Terrible ruin famine. Congress organizing relief work. Substantial help needed. Pray do needful. Direct funds Changanacherry Parameshwaran Pillay, president Congress Relief Committee Trivandrum."

[2] *Vide* "*Varnashrama* or *Varnasankara*?", 17-7-1924.

262. *THE LOKAMANYA ANNIVERSARY*

This fourth anniversary of the withdrawal of the physical presence of the Lokamanya from our midst has a special significance for me and the movement I represent. Both friends and critics inform me that a section of the Maharashtra Press is delivering a series of attacks on the movement and me which I should read and answer. I have resisted the temptation to do so. But from what they write and the extracts they send, I know enough to understand their meaning.

I am anxious to pay my quota of tribute to the memory of the deceased on this occasion of the fourth anniversary. But, in the midst of distrust of me by some of the best of the followers of the Lokamanya, how shall I pay my quota?

The task is difficult. Just as, on that memorable night in 1920, I returned from Sardar Griha after having had a last look at the remains as they lay in the death chamber, I felt an oppressive loneliness. I was secure in the Lokamanya's presence. But by his departure I felt hopelessly insecure. I could differ from him and express my difference in respectful terms, but we could never misunderstand each other. I could not feel so with his followers, not because they would want to distrust me but because, being without a guide whose word was law to them, they would always feel insecure and hesitant about my views and not in perfect agreement among themselves. Division in their ranks was the last thing in the world I desired. I have more than once expressed my admiration for the Maharashtra party. It has a determined policy. It is well-drilled. It is able. It has a record of great sacrifice behind it. I wanted and want still to capture, not to divide the party. I wanted and still want to convert it to my view of the means for the attainment of swaraj. With Lokamanya alive, I had only him to convert or to be converted by him. He had an instinctive perception of things and situations. As he said to me, 'If the people follow your method, I am yours.'

But today there is a divided Maharashtra. If, however, my faith in satyagraha is immutable, I must conquer Maharashtra as I hope to conquer Englishmen. But I must have the help of Maharashtra No-changers. If they have understood the secret of non-violence and truth, they must actively love the Pro-changers even whilst they differ from them. They must not criticize them.

Each party has enough work to do without flying at each other's throats.

Two distinguished friends have appealed to me to bring the two parties together and lead them. One of them, in the course of a long letter, says:

> To my mind there is no more necessary or radical contradiction but only a difference between the Tilak policy and the Gandhi policy than between submarine blockade and aeroplane attack. Indeed, the two can work together, (but along separate lines—the Tilak policy within the Councils, the Gandhi policy in the country outside, at large) in open, express and, therefore, rightous alliance against the common enemy for the common good.

These sentences put forth the position clearly up to a point. I say 'up to a point' because my conception of non-co-operation is exclusive of participation in the Councils. That may be and is my limitation. One man cannot control both the movements—those of the submarine and the aeroplane. Nor can the two directors change places though both may have a common aim. I can strengthen the work in the Councils only by working outside and even by decrying the Councils and thus turning the attention of the people away from them. The better analogy for my purpose is that of anti-septic and aseptic treatment. The two cannot be applied at the same time and on the same patient. But the surgeons belonging to the two schools may try their methods on different patients likely to submit to them and can do so without hampering each other. The same friend says further:

> While Tilakji and Gandhiji remain unreconciled, the heart of India will continue to be torn between the two and will not be able to settle down to steady work.

If such a catastrophe happens, if the country does not 'settle down', I would prove, indeed, an unskilful surgeon and an indifferent representative of my own method. I assure the friend and the reader that I am all attention. It is a matter of no pleasure to me that the strain continues. It will not, however, continue a day longer than is inevitable.

I invite assistance of the No-changers in hastening the process of settling down. The No-changers' faith consists in working from within and in that only. They can, therefore, religiously gag themselves. They will turn out better work. They must not retaliate. In every case where a fight in the shape of canvassing or wire-pulling is required, they may relinquish the Congress control.

The Pro-changers cannot afford to do without outside activity and agitation. They may therefore control the Press and the Congress organization if they choose. I would like, by their consent, to keep the Congress a mass organization, which it can only be, if the workers concentrate their attention upon that to the exclusion of everything else. But it cannot be so kept if there has to be a pitched and bitter fight between two parties. In that case the No-changers must, even if it is possible by manœuvring to secure a majority, surrender control with the greatest good grace to the Pro-changers. Let us recognize this one fact. The masses do not yet actively participate in or understand our method of work. Only workers in their midst can gain influence over them. I could quote a dozen illustrations of silent workers who have more influence with the masses than any of our notable orators. We must not, therefore, use the masses as pawns in the game. Nor should control of the Congress be surrendered in a manner to embarrass the Pro-changers. The passage to their hands must be decorous and frank, without mental reservations. Such delivery can only be made by those who have a living faith in the charkha and who will grudge to take away a single minute from it and its organization.

But whether the No-changers appreciate and follow my advice or not, I hope, God willing, to prove my faith by completest surrender at a time and in a manner that cannot embarrass the Pro-changers and cannot compromise the national cause. When I have succeeded in so doing, not before, I shall have paid my humble tribute to the memory of the Lokamanya. I can deserve the heritage left by him only by being true to myself.

Young India, 31-7-1924

263. *NOTES*

Unhappy Malabar

Last week I referred to the floods in South Kanara. This week the public has the painful news that Malabar is practically under water. I have also a wire from Mr. Nambudripad giving deatails of the havoc played by the floods and asking me for help. The matter, however, seems to me to be beyond the capacity of private agency. The Congress neither possesses funds nor influence nor an organization that can cope with a calamity of the magnitude such as Malabar has to face. It is best in all humility to admit our limitations. I would even not hesitate to help the distresse

people, if necessary, through any committee that the authorities may appoint, provided, of course, that they would accept our help. If we find that our service is unwelcome or the organization of official help is make-believe, I should refrain from joining the committee and should render such personal and individual help as I may be capable of rendering. God will not punish me for want of capacity. But He will for want of will. I would, therefore, advise local workers to do whatever lies in their power and neglect no opportunity of alleviating distress. After all, money plays the least part in such times. It is the personal touch, the readiness to suffer for the sake of the sufferers, readiness to share the last morsel with the neighbour in distress that counts for much more than millions. The sacrifice of the Brahmin who shared his scanty meal with the man in distress was infinitely more meritorious than the rich sacrifice of king Yudhishthira who showered gold mohurs as donations.

To S. V. K.

I must apologize for having delayed my reply to your questions. Here it is:

(1) My fast in Ahmedabad in connection with the mill-strike of 1917[1] was against 'lovers'—the mill-hands, and not against the owners—'the tyrants'. I announced at the time that my fast was not flawless, because it was bound to influence the mill-owners who were personal friends. But it was not possible for me unconcerned to see the mill-hands, my associates, committing a breach of a vow, solemnly repeated by them in my presence for twenty-one days. The effect of the fast was electrical. The wavering labourers became at once strong in their determination.

(2) My philosophy does teach me to love alike friend and foe. But that does not do away with the distinction till the foe has become friend. The letter to Mr. Joseph was cryptic. It was not written for publication. Mr. Joseph could easily dot the i's and cross the t's. The fuller enunciation of the proposition put before Mr. Joseph would be:

One may fast to reform a comrade in work and thought, but not one however friendly if he is hostile. Thus, I may not fast against Pandit Motilalji Nehru, although he is a dear friend, in order to convert him to my view on Councils, but I fasted against the Bombay rioters because they were, though not personal friends, comrades in the same mission. We have no right by fasts to convert people to our ideals. That would be a species of

[1] This should be 1918; *vide* Vol. XIV, pp. 256-7.

violence. But it is our duty to strengthen by our fasting those who hold the same ideals, but are likely to weaken under pressure.

(3) I happened to preside at a meeting of condolence on the death of the great Irish patriot MacSwiney and humbly expressed my opinion that I could not ethically justify the fast on the facts that the public had then before them. I have since seen no new facts to alter my opinion. I am not here concerned with the political value of that celebrated fast, if it had any. Nor must I be understood to cast any reflection upon the memory of the deceased patriot. I am simply giving my view as a satyagrahi on the ethics of the fast.

India's Share

An American friend sends me a long letter on the opium policy of the Government of India. She quotes the following from a bulletin issued by the British Society for the suppression of the opium trade:

> The nations are face to face with a growing evil which, unless it is dealt with speedily, internationally and drastically, may become the gravest curse from which the world has ever suffered. Plague, war and famine could not combine to present a more terrifying prospect than is presented by drug addiction. . . . What is the crux of the whole position? It is, undoubtedly, the over-production of opium in India. If that were arrested, other sources of production could be dealt with with comparative ease. The Indian Government maintains just this one trade. Condemned by a unanimous vote of the House of Commons as morally indefensible when carried on with China, India is still permitted to supply five Eastern Governments with as much opium as they officially ask for. Boasting that she does not sell the drug to private persons in those five countries, by agreement she drenches them with narcotics which find their way by smugglers into China. Passing a Dangerous Drug Act for our own country, which forbids the unlicensed possession of opium and its derivatives, the British Indian Government yet maintains this scandalous and nefarious traffic.

Ignorance

A friend sends me for answer a *Guardian* cutting wherein a retired Indian police officer has succeeded in airing his general ignorance of things Indian. It is so difficult to overtake newspaper paragraphs and correct them. A movement to succeed has to pass through the stage of ridicule and ignorance. But I may say categorically that the Non-co-operation movement is nothing if it is not constructive. Its khaddar work, its efforts (it does not matter that they appear to be unsuccessful at present), its work among and

for the untouchables, its national schools, its attempt to found panchayats, its propaganda against drink and opium, its relief of distress due to famines and floods are all examples of constructive work. The movement does not seek to establish Hindu Raj by the 'grace of British Raj', but it seeks to establish swaraj, meaning the government by the chosen representatives of the people in the place of the British Raj i.e., government by British or Indian administrators utterly irresponsible to the people and appointed in the interest of the exploitation of India and her people. Full and frank expiation has always been made for every mistake made in the course of the struggle. No movement on such a large scale has been so free from violence as the Non-co-operation movement. Compare the Indian to every other contemporary national movement and the list of murders and other violence committed in the name of patriotism. The writer brings up for commendation the Christian work among the untouchables; I must not enter into the merits of Chrisitian work in India. The indirect influence of Chrisitianity has been to quicken Hinduism into life. The cultured Hindu society has admitted its grevious sin against the untouchables. But the effect of Christianity upon India in general must be judged by the life lived in our midst by the average Christian and its effect upon us. I am sorry to have to record my opinion that it has been disastrous. It pains me to have to say that the Christian missionaries as a body, with honourable exceptions, have actively supported a system which has impoverished, enervated and demoralized a people considered to be among the gentlest and the most civilized on earth. Lastly, I do not share the belief that there can or will be on earth one religion. I am striving, therefore, to find a common factor and to induce mutual tolerance.

Change of Heart

Here is a reverse instance to the foregoing. An English correspondent writes:

> I was in an Indian regiment during the events of 1919 and I know only too well how easy it is to be blind to truth, how difficult it is for Englishmen to extend their very limited outlooks. I left the army for a university. While there I was appointed to the Indian Civil Service. Fortunately as I see it now, I was impelled to resign it. Lately, away from the seclusion of a university, I have seen for myself the horrors of industrialism, materialism and machinery.
>
> I have followed your great work for India as a rare example of spiritual truth applied to the world. It has stirred me the more as I saw

the more clearly that there were two Englands. I hope and trust that, in delivering India from the menace of a materialistic civilization, you will also free the great mass of English people from its evil results.

This aspect of the Indian movement is, of course, well-known to you.

But I thought that in a life which must entail its own disappointments and sufferings, a tribute of recognition from one who was an 'Anglo-Indian' in 1919 would not be unacceptable.

School-books Proscribed

The U.P. Government issued on the 15th instant the following notice:

> In exercise of the powers conferred by section 99A (V of 1898), the Governor-in-Council hereby declares to be forfeited to His Majesty all copies, wherever found, of Pandit Ramdas Gour's Hindi readers Nos. III, IV, V and VI published by Baij Nath Kedia, Hindi Pustak Agency, 126, Harrison Road, Calcutta, and printed at the Banik Press, Calcutta, and also all other copies of or extracts from the same readers wherever printed inasmuch as the said readers, in the opinion of the Local Government, contain seditious matter, the publication of which is punishable under Section 124A, Indian Penal Code.

Now these readers have been before the public for nearly three years. They are widely used in national schools. They have been adopted in municipal schools also. The Provincial Congress Committee has, therefore, rightly congratulated Professor Ramdas Gour, declared the books to be inoffensive and recommended their continuance notwithstanding the Government order. One would have thought that the Government had now abandoned the policy of utilizing arbitrary procedure against non-co-operators. The Government contend that the books are in breach of Section 124A of the Penal Code. It was then open to them to prosecute the author and secure a conviction against him. It might then have been justified in proscribing the books. I have taken the trouble of going through the contents of all the volumes. They appear to me to be perfectly harmless, i.e., from the Government standpoint. The least that the Government owed the public was to inform it of the objectionable matter in the several books so as to enable the public to judge for itself as to the propriety or otherwise of the Government order, assuming, of course, that it is proper to exercise arbitrary powers in cases such as this. As it is, the conclusion is irresistible that the Government do not like the growing popularity of the readers and are seeking by questionable methods to favour its proteges whose readers may have suffered a check in competition

with Professor Ramdas Gour's. The Government must have had the readers brought to its notice by its elaborate detective agency if they were seditious. The long delay in proscribing adds to the strength of my inference. I invite the Government of the United Provinces to tender to the public full reason for its decision. I would be glad to feel that the inference I have drawn is not justified. I advise too the president of the committee to ask the Government to state its reasons and offer to advise Professor Ramdas Gour to amend his books or withdraw them from circulation if the committee is satisfied of the justness of the Government decision.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

No reader of the statement issued by Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan on the recent events in Delhi can fail to notice the deep grief underlying it. I must copy from it at least one paragrah:

> Of all the incidents which form part of the recent disturbance in Delhi, to me the most humiliating and heart-rending are the atrocious and cowardly assaults committed on women. So far I know one Mussalman woman was molested by the Hindus, but what is much worse is the fact that, during the rioting of the 15th, some of those who claim to be the votaries of Islamic faith, not content with attacking a Hindu temple and breaking the idols, perpetrated cowardly assaults on women and children. I tremble with the deepest indignation at the very idea of my co-religionists exhibiting such wanton and callous disregard for the honour and sanctity of womanhood. No word of condemnation is strong enough for the perpetrators of this crime and I appeal to all true Muslims to condemn this depravity in unfaltering and absolutely unqualified terms. I am inviting Jamiat-ul-Ulema and the Khilafat Committee to stand up and exercise all that is best in Islam in order to condemn and to prevent the repetition of such acts of savage lawlessness. It is our moral duty as true Mussalmans, to make these acts absolutely impossible and, if we don't succeed in this, we deserve to be defeated in our efforts for national freedom and swaraj.

A correspondent upbraids me for saying nothing in my statement on the assaults referred to by Hakimji. My note was based on the very first news of the trouble. These had no reference to the assaults. Events then took an uglier turn. The news was too serious to base public criticism on the alarming telegrams. I, therefore, entered into correspondence with friends in Delhi, but I am not able to criticize anything with effect now. Fortunately, Maulana Mahomed Ali is now in Delhi. He is making inquiries and I have suggested that, if it is at all possible, he should, as President of

the Congress, publish the results of his preliminary inquiry. I am fully aware of my duty in the matter. My place is just now by the side of the Maulana Saheb. I am deterred from so doing by the advice of medical friends. All the medical precaution that has been insisted on may not be necessary, for whilst I am not moving about, I am able to go through a great amount of work. But I want to avoid risks so far as it is possible. I may assure the friends who are rightly reminding me of my duty at this juncture that I have placed myself unreservedly at Maulana Mahomed Ali's disposal and I have asked him not to think of my health if he needs me in Delhi immediately. And, in any event, I am trying to hurry forward to Delhi. But if Maulana Mahomed Ali does not require me to go to Delhi earlier, I do not want to commence travelling till the end of August. It was because my health had suffered some deterioration in Ahmedabad that Mr. Vithalbhai Patel was requested to extend the time for the presentation of the Corporation address to the end of August. But I shall have no hesitation, if need be, to go to Delhi before going to Bombay for the address.

Favouritism or Justice

I note that the chief executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation has come in for a good deal of hostile criticism because of his having given 25 out of 33 appointments to Mussalmans. I have not read the comments themselves. But I have read the statement made by the chief executive officer. In my humble opinion, it is a creditable performance. I have no doubt that appointments have not till now been made with impartiality, whether by Europeans or Indians. There is no doubt, too, that in many cases Hindus have influenced decisions in their favour. It ill-becomes them to quarrel against many posts having now gone to Mussalmans. If the charge be true that the appointments have a party purpose behind them, there is nothing immoral or reprehensible in the fact itself if they are otherwise justifiable. In England, such appointments are certainly made in party interests, though, as a rule, care is exercised not to sacrifice efficiency. Personally, I would like appointments to go to the best men irrespective of parties, and should, therefore, be made by a permanent non-party board. But if Hindus wish to see India free, they must be ready and willing to sacrifice in favour of their Mussalman and other brethren. I can heartily endorse the remark of the chief executive officer when he says:

> With thousands of educated young men out of employment and on the verge of starvation and, with a very limited number of vacancies, it is not possible for any human being to do anything which will please all.

> Whatever I may do, I am sure to leave the major portion of thə unemployed as discontented as before. The only solution of this problem is the provision of technical education and in this matter, the Corporation can, in my opinion, do much.

We must learn to do without these appointments. Only a microscopic minority can get them. Education must cease to be merely clerical. Why may not a graduate be an artisan or a hawker of vegetables or khaddar?

A Muslim Khadi Committee

Mr. S. H. Uraizee, secretary of Muslim Khadi Committee recently established in Ahmedabad, sends me the following for publication:

> Hazrat Maulana Azad Subhani Saheb of Cawnpore with the help of some enthusiastic Muslims has been successfully able to organize the Muslim Khadi Committee in Ahmedabad on the 15th instant, with an express view for the wide spread of khaddar among the Mussalmans. The following gentlemen have formed the Committee.
>
> *President*—Hakim Syed Ahmed Saheb Dehlavi; *Vice-President*—Hakim Samir Saheb Siddiqui; *Secretary*—Syed Husain Uraizee; *Treasurer*—Seth Mohamedbhai Rajahbhai Shaikh; *Members*—Maulvi Syed Sajjad Hussain Saheb; Hakim Rahimullah Saheb Ajmeri; Munshi Manzar Ali Saheb; Seth Noor Mohamad Mohamadbhai Mansuri Saheb; Seth Peerbhai Adamji Modi Saheb; Seth Abdur Rahim Abdul Karim Saheb; Maulana Sharaf Saheb Dehlavi.

I have gone out of my way to advertise this committee. For, as a rule, I have been loath to publish such details. Bitter experience has shown that such committees grow up like mushrooms and have an equally transient existence. They often exist only on paper. But I am making an exception in favour of this committee in the hope that it will do credit to the founder, Maulana Azad Subhani. I have not known many Muslim organizations devoted specially to khadi work. Nor are many Muslims found to take a lively interest in this much-needed national work. Indeed, during the Bakr-Id in Ahmedabad, a friend tells me, Mussalmans could be counted on the fingers of one hand who were dressed in khadi. They were not even dressed in Indian mill-cloth. It was all foreign. Let me hope this committee will change this state of things. I hope, too, that the members are all spinners and khadi weavers.

To Spinners

The manager of the Satyagraha Ashram tells me that he is inundated with applications for slivers, spindles, holders, wheels,

carding-bows and ginning instruments. This is a healthy sign of response to the A.I.C.C. resolution. But a word of warning is necessary. Those who are new to the task would naturally require guidance and assistance. But organizers and spinners must understand that it is not possible to organize national spinning if every spinner has to be supplied with slivers from a distant central place. Slivers being very soft things get damaged in transit. It is possible to prevent crushing if they were packed in metal jars. But that means more cost than that of the slivers themselves. The ideal thing is to learn both carding and spinning. But where that is not possible, spinning clubs may be formed of thirty or less. One member of the club may be a whole-time worker merely carding and making slivers except for the half-hour he must devote to spinning. Nor is it possible to work spinning successfully if wheels, spindles, etc., have to be received from one place. There must be depots connected with every provincial committee for the supply of all accessories and repairs. The spinning-wheels are difficult to pack and cost much railage. An ordinary carpenter should be able to make a good spinning-wheel if he has a decent pattern to go by. It is because thousands of details have to be worked out for an effective organization that I would if I could make the Congress exclusively a workshop for the supply of all the material and a warehouse for the sale of khaddar. It must require hard thinking and harder toil to bring about a complete boycott of foreign cloth by effort from within. One man or one taluka becoming entirely khaddar-clad may not bring swaraj, but the whole country doing so must bring it for all that a successful boycott means. Oh! for a little imagination that would work out the implications of the khaddar movement and all doubt will vanish. That khaddar may not appeal to the nation is another matter. But that cannot be said until there is honest effort that comes only from inward faith.

To an Inquirer

No, it is not true that I reduced my meals because the country was not spinning. I reduced them for the conservation of mental energy and health. I have now reverted to three meals and *bhakri*. But when the 'Siamese twins' lovingly pressed me before their departure from Ahmedabad to return to three meals and increase the quantity I was then taking, I said humourously that I would do so if they re-established Hindu-Muslim unity and popularized khaddar. Either, therefore, the reference by them to the reduction of my meals was a friendly licence or their taking my joke seriously. In either case, I agree with the inquirer that the reference to my

personal habits or restraints should have been avoided. Both the Hindu-Muslim and the khadi questions must be decided on merits. Both are a vital necessity for the national existence and we shall succeed only when we have converted the nation to our view.

"For Gandhiji or Country"

A friend says in effect the fashion nowadays has become to goad students into spinning 'for the sake of Gandhiji'. He asks whether the appeal is justified. To a certain extent an appeal of that character under certain circumstances is not inappropriate so long as I stand for the country and that alone. An appeal to spin for my sake may go home more directly than one 'for the country'. The proper thing no doubt is for everybody to spin for the country, better still for himself in the higher sense of the term. For everyone who works for the country works for himself also. He who works only for himself works to his own undoing. Our interest must be identical with and must merge in the country's. Those, however, who spin on occasion only and for show and afterwards stop, practise deceipt.

First in the Field

A.I.K.B. has already begun to get response to the spinning resolution. The reason for the prompt response from some is obvious. Practised spinners can easily spin 150 yards per half hour. 300 yards per hour is the average speed. There are many already who have finished their quota. The highest speed attained is over 500 yards per hour.

Shrimati Avantika Bai and her friends are the first to send their yarn. Most of them do not belong to the Congress. They are certainly not on any Congress executive. But as I have said in these pages, it is the duty of every Indian, no matter to what party he or she belongs, to send his or her quota to the A.I.K. Board. I, therefore, congratulate these ladies upon their gift. They would naturally like to know the report of the experts on the quality of their yarn. So far as the quality is concerned, it is good. But the manner of doing the hanks, etc., is naturally not as it should be. Over an hour had to be given to examining and classifying the yarn. As a result of the examination of this lot, the Secretary sends me the following specific instructions for the attention of spinners:

(1) Each spinner should attach a label on each of his or her hanks and it should contain:

(a) The length and number of strands in it.

(b) The weight in *tolas*.

(c) The count which may result on calculation.

These labels are in addition to the main label referred to, containing name, etc., of the spinners.

(2) All hanks should be of uniform size and bulk.

(3) Every hank should contain two or more leases in it, which is done by passing a piece of strong string round each skein of 80 or 100 or more strands and crossing the string after each successive skein in the hank.

(4) It would be better to write down on the card attached to the bundle the kind of cotton used. It will give an opportunity to the collector of the yarn of knowing the varieties used in the different provinces and of instructing as to the counts to be drawn from a given variety.

It has been customary in Bombay, and elsewhere, too, for that matter, to use mill slivers. Yarn drawn from mill slivers is perfectly useless for the purpose intended. The purpose is to popularize all the hand-processes in connection with raw cotton. Between mill slivers and mill cotton there is only a shade of difference. If we may use mill slivers, we may as well use mill-spun yarn.

The central idea behind hand-spinning is to put money into the pockets of millions by finding them an easy uniform cottage industry. Slivers must, therefore, be hand-made. The question of the circumference of the reel should also be decided. That the reels should be uniform goes without saying. If they are not, it is tedious to find the count of a given quantity of yarn. Experience has shown that the circumference of the reel should be four feet. Then 375 lengths or strands would make a hank of 500 yards. Four such hanks would make 2,000 yards. It is incredibly simple to find the count of such hanks if we know the weight. Convert the *tolas* weight into *anies* and divide the number of strands by the *anies*, the answer is the count. Thus, if a hank of 375 strands weighs, say, 15 *anies*, the count is 375/15 = 25. Many suggestions have been made as to the size of the reel. Experience seems to favour four feet circumference. These reels are attached to the Ashram wheels. It is a convenience no doubt to have them so. But reels can be easily improvised with slit bamboo. Four to six pieces of slit bamboos of required length, pierced in the middle and supported on an upright [*sic*] whose ends pass through three bamboo pieces on either side and held in position by means of strings, make a serviceable reel. The appliances accompanying the wheel are as simple as the wheel itself. Lastly, it would be well to remember that the yarn should be sprayed

and kept on the reel for an hour for saturation and drying. The spraying settles the twist.

Young India, 31-7-1924

264. LETTER TO V. K. VILASINI

SABARMATI,
July 31, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

This is the answer to your question.

Love Truth at all cost. This can be done only by loving all that lives, and feeling for them.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRIMATI V. K. VILASINI
HILL PALACE
TRIPPOONITARA, COCHIN STATE

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

265. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[1]

[On or after *July 31, 1924*]

MY OPINION DAMAGE BEYOND OUR CAPACITY WE MUST ASSIST LARGER AGENCIES WITH PERSONAL SERVICE.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 9007

[1] This was in reply to C. Rajagopalachari's telegram of July 29, received on July 31, which read: "Flood ravages terrible magnitude. Advise whether we should attempt relief from Congress Funds." A similar telegram was sent to Srinivasa Iyengar in reply to a telegram of July 30, received on July 31, reading: "Large funds immediately required for relief. Appalling distress caused by floods. Kindly advise Working Committee grant fifty thousand immediately."

266. MESSAGE TO "BANDE MATARAM"

[*August 1, 1924*][1]

I wish the readers of *Bande Mataram* will contemplate the life of the Lokamanya on his anniversary. They will then realize that he required of us selfless devotion to the cause of the country. Will they give a paltry half hour's labour in the shape of spinning with religious punctuality till India becomes free?

M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-8-1924

267. LETTER TO ASAF ALI[2]

SABARMATI,
August 1, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. In one of your letters, I do not know whether I should say, you were impatient or unreasonable. In any case, whatever it was it was perfectly natural, as you were working in most trying circumstances and at a time when you never knew what the next moment had in store for you. If I were similarly placed I would have done probably the same thing and thought of blaming everything and everybody. The statements which are now being issued will, I think, do some good, but I would like all such statements to be stopped now pending something definite and final from the President of the Congress.

Can anything be done to stop these prosecutions? What does it matter whether a particular offence is cognizable or not? After all, if the parties concerned do not want any prosecutions, the police would be hard put to it to bring such prosecutions to a successful issue. I cannot help feeling with you that, if these prosecutions continue, we shall not be able to find true facts be-

[1] The message was sent on the Lokamanya Day, i.e., August 1, 1924.

[2] Asaf Ali (1888-1953); barrister and nationalist Muslim politician; took a leading part in the Khilafat movement

cause, as you very properly say, those who know will be afraid to come near us.

I return the papers you wanted.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

ASAF ALI, ESQ.
KUCHA-I-CHELAN
DELHI

From the original: C.W. 5995. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

268. *SPEECH AT NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE*[1]

AHMEDABAD,
August 1, 1924

SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

I am extremely sorry to say that I have not been able to prepare my speech as well as I would have liked to. Honestly speaking, I should not have embarked on this venture. I have neither the physical energy nor the time for it. But so much pressure was brought to bear on me that I had to agree to attend the Conference if it was held early in August. Thinking about the matter, I saw that, besides attending it, I would also have to do some work. I tried my best to find some time to put my ideas on paper, but I could not manage to do even that; nor could I think over the matter as carefully as I wanted to. I hope you will forgive me for this.

Shri Kishorelal's request is beyond my power to grant. If teachers behave as brothers towards one another, it will mean swaraj, and that is not within my power to give. Such a prayer can be addressed only to God. If He grants it, we shall have received everything. A request like this will probably seem no difficult matter to you, but it is beyond me to grant it. I only wish to make some suggestions to you and to place before you some figures which will be an encouragement to you and me.

[1] The Conference of the teachers of national schools in Gujarat, over which Gandhiji presided, was called "to organize the educational work in Gujarat and to find means and ways of producing a better type of teachers and creating a brotherly feeling and co-ordination of efforts among those engaged in the work of education".

The country is today passing through a period of despair and one of the reasons for this is myself. I placed before it a time-limit of one year within which, I said, we ought to win swaraj. Not one but several years have passed and still it seems that swaraj is far away. To some it may appear to be even farther away now than it was in the year 1921. But I do not believe it to be so. To me it seems to be nearer. To realize this one must have unshakable faith like mine. Such faith is not to be had as a gift from anyone. It only comes from experience. If I had not set a time-limit and if we had not been required to work on that basis, even the little progress we have achieved would have been impossible.

You are not unfamiliar with the figures which I am going to place before you. They are good enough to keep up our spirit. There is no reason to be ashamed of Gujarat's achievement in regard to any item of the Non-co-operation programme, no reason not only for Gujarat but for the whole country. It is true that we could not do what fell to our share on the basis of numbers; if, however, everyone had exerted himself to his best—and to my knowledge there is no reason not to believe that it has been so—then we have nothing to be ashamed of. Let me explain to you why I say this.

I have censured my co-workers and asked them why they could do only as much as they did, because that was my duty. Anyone who wants to serve and who, in consequence, has had to take up leadership, has no choice but to demand more and more of his co-workers and it is his duty to censure them. When, however, I think over the matter objectively, I do not feel that anyone has been dishonest about his work.

I have said this in order to present the bright side. I have obtained figures in support of it. You know them. They have been recorded by the Registrar and have been compiled by you, teachers. I want, with the help of these figures, to fill both you and myself with hope. We have 10,000 pupils in the national schools, not taking into account the number in the schools of three municipalities. We have spent Rs. 3½ lakhs on them. There are 500 girls among the pupils. That is a rather small number, but we have been educating these. The Municipalities of Ahmedabad, Nadiad and Surat adopted the principle of non-co-operation and turned their schools into national schools. With the number of pupils in these schools added, the figure comes to 20,000. Of these, 10,000 are from Ahmedabad. We have 800 teachers. The salaries paid to them are included in the sum

of Rs. 3,50,000 I have mentioned. We have two colleges, and also a *Puratatva Mandir*[1]. I have heard in this connection that such work is being done nowhere else in the country. There are three living institutions which support us and are being supported by us. These are the Dakshinamurti Vidyarthi Bhavan[2], the Charotar Kelavani Mandal[3] and the Broach Kelavani Mandal[4]. Their founders and managers will grant that, if those institutions have, by joining the Non-co-operation movement, added to its prestige, they have also gained vitality from it.

Further, we have prepared a number of text-books. I went through many of them while in jail. I have seen and examined carefully the books prepared by the Dakshinamurti and the Charotar Mandal. I do not say I have read them, but, having gone through many books, I have developed the ability to discover by merely turning over the pages of a book what it contains, in what style it is written and what the author wishes to say. The authors of these books and the institutions deserve compliments. The books published by the Vidyapith are in addition to these. If we examine recent history, that is, the past 50 years, we shall discover that throughout it no such work has been done. All the work till now used to be done by the Government. We cannot take credit for it. Our people were engaged in it no doubt, but the scheme was drawn up by the Government and the men appointed by it. It strengthened the present system and was conceived with the aim of imparting education which would do so. If we compare the number of books that they produced in the first year of their having started the work with what we have done, even then we shall see that our performance is better than theirs. But we do not wish to make comparisons with others.

Gujarat was, and is even today, the most backward province. The Gujaratis are unlettered, they only know how to trade and can think only of bringing into Gujarat as much money as possible through business. The idea of creating a literature for the general public was not widespread before the Non-co-operation movement. The first to start work in that direction was the Sastu Sahityavardhak Karyalaya, which means Swami Akhandanand. He put into people's hands a large number of low-priced books in

[1] School of archaeology

[2] In Kathiawar

[3] At Anand, in Gujarat

[4] In South Gujarat

Gujarat. However, the Non-co-operation movement has done much more, so that we may perhaps forget the excellent work done by Akhandanand, though, of course, it is such as ought not to be forgotten.

I have said more about text-books than I had intended. I shall also sound a note of warning now. If there was a flow of such text-books in Gujarat, I would not be particularly delighted with that. I became alarmed when I was flooded with them while I was in the Yeravda Prison.

The printing and get-up of all of them was beautiful. One I liked in particular. But all this is not in keeping with Gujarat's condition. Gujarat, of course, is no beggar. Comparatively speaking, it has enough money, but I feel that it cannot bear such a burden; it cannot digest such a mass of books, nor can its pockets afford them. If such books are brought out for cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Nadiad and Broach, I have nothing to say. No doubt, the brains of their residents cannot bear such heavy reading, though their pockets can afford them. Parents in villages, however, most certainly cannot afford them. The books we print and place before the people must be such as the children of even the poorest can buy. If I could, I would publish books costing at the most four pice each.

I have been informed that the Navajivan Prakashan Mandir has brought out a number of books. People do not know that I am not its proprietor. It belongs to Swami Anandanand. He informs me only after everything has been printed off. I have received complaints that Anandanand has deceived Gujarat, that he has persuaded *Navajivan* to donate Rs. 50,000, but do I know, they ask me, how much he has swallowed? To that I shall reply that I have no such swindlers staying with me and that, if there are any, I do not know them. In this institution, some draw no salaries and some take as much as they need; if, however, I allow a reasonable rate of payment, I estimate that the figure would exceed Rs. 50,000.

Wanted only Text-books

It is true that, had I been there, I would not have allowed so many books to be published by Navajivan Prakashan Mandir. I would think a thousand times before I presented a book to the people. I have written a book called *Balpothi*[1], not much worth talking about. If I sit down to read it, I can finish it in five minutes.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 122-8.

If I read it a little carefully, I would finish it in ten minutes. I have not read the comments on it which have been received. I know that many of these are not likely to please me much. There is no measure in the praise or censure generally showered on me and, therefore, either has little effect on me. However that be, the idea behind that book is great. It is that a teacher should impart education only by word of mouth; that he cannot do so with the help of books and text-books. Who knows what stuff gets into the brains of children in countries where there are heaps of text-books! The devil takes possession of them, the children's thinking power is reduced to nil. This conclusion of mine is based on my experience of countless children and on discussions with many teachers. I used to move about with wide-open eyes in South Africa. There was a conflagration in the country, and moving even in the midst of that I observed this thing. Let us compare two schools: one in which teachers are supplied with text-books and another in which they have to teach without the use of a single text-book. The teachers in both are equally gifted. The one, then, which has no text-books to use will be able to give more to the pupils than the one which has them. I do not want children to have any text-books. The teachers may, if they wish, read them. We may write as much for them as we choose. If you write for children, you will make the teachers mechanical and destroy their originality and initiative. I do not, of course, wish to arrest the progress of teachers. I merely want that you should also know this point of view of mine. The authors of text-books are experienced writers. Where the people need their books, by all means let them buy them, but please understand what lies behind my attitude.

You may ask me if I have worked as a teacher. My view is based on considerable experience and I have thought a great deal about education. Kindly think about the matter from the point of view indicated by me and go a little slow. The point of what I am saying is that, if you wish to bring out books for lakhs of children, well, Gujarat does not have the money for that and it will lose interest in this business; secondly, we should not burden the children's brains with these books.

If a person who has got some new idea sacrifices himself for it and puts it before the world immediately he gets it, that will be a loss both to him and the world. If, however, he keeps it back, experiments with it, tries it on himself and on children and verifies it, and waits even thereafter, the world will lose nothing. I have some examples of great men in support of this. They kept back their ideas and neither they nor the world lost anything in consequence.

Such persons have later on even revised their ideas or, in face of new experience, have abandoned the original ideas. One example of this is our impatient Andrews, a great friend of mine who is on the most intimate terms with me. Ten years ago he was in the habit of immediately giving expression in writing to any ideas which occurred to him. Those ideas of ten years ago are not his today. He is of course a religious man—and so are we. If we die without expressing our ideas, the soul will carry them forward and the world will certainly have them some time.

Genesis of National Education

If we think over the circumstances in which the Vidyapith and its subsidiary bodies came into being, many of our problems will disappear. Today we are thinking about education as educationists. If we think that the teachers' business is merely to teach, we must do that in the best possible manner; but our problem is not so easy. We have not set up the Vidyapith and the schools merely for the purpose of imprating education. We established it as part of the Non-co-operation movement. That means that the teachers, pupils and parents have joined the army of swaraj, are volunteers dedicated to the cause of swaraj, are Non-co-operators. But I am not here to tell you of the wonders of non-co-operation. I wish to explain the duty of a patriotic teacher. When you joined the movement for swaraj, you accepted at that very moment that the principle of non-co-operation was right.

If there is any error in that principle, the Congress will revise its policy; till then, we must go ahead, assuming that we are on the right track. We are not here to decide whether non-co-operation is right in principle. This is common ground between us, that the Vidyapith and the schools exist to help the cause of swaraj. We shall think about education as education after we have secured swaraj. Today we have to look at it from the limited point of view which I have explained.

We should keep this point of view before us in running our primary schools, *Vinay Mandirs*[1] and colleges, as also the *Puratatva Mandir*. We must on no account depart from the principle of non-co-operation and of swaraj. We wish to get swaraj and we have accepted truth and non-violence as the means. No matter what the words "peaceful" and "legitimate" in the Congress resolution mean, to me they only mean truth and non-violence, and I believe

[1] Secondary schools

that Gujarat too interprets them to mean the same. Besides this, we have adopted the programme of fivefold boycott. If we abandon it, we cannot keep our pledge. If it is true that we are the guardians of children's moral character, we shall teach them a wrong lesson by abandoning the boycott. Those who do not believe in those items should leave these institutions. Everyone has to earn his living, but that cannot be our principal aim. Anyone, then, who does not accept the conditions of non-co-operation should leave. To join a national school merely for a living does honour neither to the teacher nor to the taught.

Of the two aspects of our struggle, we have achieved our aim in respect of one, the destructive. If we persist in that work even now, we shall be imitating a senseless farmer. When a farmer wants to sow, he removes the weeds and pebbles from the field, ploughs it and makes the soil even. If, even after he has done all this, he goes on turning things this way and that in the field, he will be simply wasting his time. Nor will it be proper for him to make the same experiments in another field without first watching their effects in the first one. Similarly, it does not help if one person leaves and another takes his place. The first one should remain in his place and work on. And as he does so, he should have patience and the faith that by and by the field will have its crop. Our destructive work has been completed, and now we have to take up constructive work, which will produce lasting results. That constructive work will supplement the programme of boycott. If the work which we have been doing wins people's admiration, if its value is recognized, the other schools will automatically disappear. Everyone admits that those schools have no soul in them and asks us to give them something else in their place. If we have unshakable faith in our work, we would continue it whether it takes us one year or twenty to complete it.

Our main task is to establish schools. The teachers should forget all about panchayats and law-courts. It is not for us to think about them. If we think about our own duty, we shall have conquered the world. Our second responsibility is to win a good name for our schools. We have enlarged the area a great deal, now we have to pick and choose from it. Those of you who are farmers will understand the point. From among the plants which grow from the seeds sown by him, a farmer will pluck out those which are of indifferent quality, sallow, or lifeless. Even from the crop of wheat which he has harvested, he will stock the best portion as seed and will reap a better harvest every year. We have succeeded in en-

larging the area; now we should address ourselves to improving the strength and quality.

The second item of work relates to the spinning-wheel and untouchability, and the third concerns Hindu-Muslim unity. The Hindu-Muslim problem is not so acute in Gujarat, but it certainly exists. If we spread among children the idea that Hindus and Muslims must live as blood-brothers, the mutual bitterness to be found even in Gujarat will disappear. It is true no heads have been broken in Gujarat, but our relations are not brotherly. The schools are responsible for this, though not much. All the schools, of course, have the obligation to admit *Antyaja* children. The Vidyapith adopted the rule of admitting *Antyaja* children at the risk of its own existence. What have the teachers done? What have the parents done? The latter are afraid. They are ready to run the schools without *Antyaja* pupils. They would be happy if the latter could be kept out. Hence the schools do not have many *Antyaja* children. It is our good fortune to have workers like Indulal, Mama and others, through whose efforts we have 15 *Antyaja* schools. Those *Antyaja* schools are a matter of shame for us, they are no evidence of our capacity for work or generosity. Special schools for *Antyajas* become necessary only in places where the latter are despised. If they are not despised, their children would be attending the common schools. We should employ the force of our love and bring in the *Antyaja* children. We should, first, train them, then help them and others to look neat and tidy, bathe them, feed them, and, if they speak clumsily, correct their pronunciation of words. But we have not done this, and that has been a great crime, not a minor one.

If we hold, as we must, the removal of untouchability to be an essential part of the work to be done by the Congress, it will be impossible to win swaraj for the country as long as we continue to keep the *Antyajas* at a distance and are not ready to treat them as our equals. English newspapers and spokesmen of the British Government may exploit this statement of mine, but I am not worried on that score. We wish to win swaraj only through self-purification. Hence, I will keep on repeating this statement.

I am often told that the teachers will resign, that the pupils will leave. But will it matter if they do? Workers in Belgaum and Shri Jamnalalji have informed me that resignations have been coming in at several places. In some places, not enough members are left even to run committees. I was happy to hear this. If I have a crore of rupees and, on testing them on the anvil, find that they are counterfeit, what would I do with them? I would cer-

tainly throw them into the Sabarmati. If, however, there should be one genuine coin among that crore and if I were asked to find it out, taking my own time about it, when would I succeed? If I want to buy flour for my son, how will that coin help me? I for one would search out that genuine coin right today and throw away the rest. I am thus not worried about the resignations. Those counterfeit coins may as well leave us. Let us teachers become fearless, let us stand fearlessly on truth and maintain that the school which the *Antyaja* children cannot attend is not a national school, not a school for swaraj, not a non-co-operation school. I am a connoisseur of precious stones, testing everything by the criterion of swaraj. I would value only a school which served our aim. We should go and join a school with a firm resolve that we would leave it if it refused admission to *Antyaja* children and if the parents wanted to keep them out indirectly. We should stay in an *Antyaja* locality and teach *Antyaja* children there. If city children come there, well and good, else so much the less burden, so much the less financial risk. Why not admit that we have no funds, that the people do not give us money, that they do not approve of this *Antyaja* work, that they refuse to give money because this work is at present unpopular? We must, all the same, carry it on. We should think that the people are on a wrong path, that they must come to the right path, and that, when they do so, we shall be ready to help as signallers. If we describe as a national school one which does not support an item of the Non-co-operation programme which is of lasting importance, we shall be committing a sin.

Have I become mad? If we really believe that we can win swaraj by spinning, we must act accordingly. I have received two letters which say: You have become a fool. Earlier, you showed some moderation when talking about the spinning-wheel. But now you have discarded that too. The world may call me a fool, a madman or give me any other bad name; still I shall keep repeating the same thing. What shall I do if I can think of nothing else? I for one would not pass even a college graduate and would not give him a certificate till he has passed the test of the spinning-wheel. People object to this, saying that it is coercion. What does coercion mean? Is there no coercion in laying down the rule that everyone must study English, Gujarati and Sanskrit? In the same way, we can say spinning will have to be learnt compulsorily. If we do not believe in the idea, then, it would be a different matter. What is wrong in telling the pupils that they cannot remain in the school if they do not spin? Just because a man will shout when we touch a boil on him,

should we refrain from touching it? He will feel relieved after we have opened it. There is no coercion in this, but only good order. We should feel no qualms in presenting to children what we believe to be essential for them. Those children and parents who do not like the thing should not join. If the primary school, the *Vinay Mandir* and the college are schools for swaraj, they ought to have this rule [about spinning]. Other considerations are irrelevant for us. Those who have changed their ideas may resign. As long as the Congress resolution stands, such men cannot stay on.

We should certainly not keep people in the dark about these two conditions. Why fear parents? If they do not like the conditions, let them send their children to Government schools. What is the difference between Government schools and national schools? I myself used to say that the only difference was the atmosphere of freedom in our schools. Some will ask if that was not enough. Of course, it is. But there was no time when the spinning-wheel and the *Antyajas* were out of my mind. I have never believed even in my dreams that freedom means licence. Let the children climb, if they will, over the teachers' shoulders, abuse them, address them without proper respect, but they must certainly obey them. What does the child who ill-treats an *Antyaja* know about freedom? And what love will he have for freedom? The members of the advanced communities in Bardoli who exploit the *Dublas* may know how to oppress, but what do they know of swaraj? The teachers are pledged to banish oppression in every form. I would certainly introduce a rule that a pupil should submit a certain quantity of yarn at the time of every examination. I would then be able to show in a short time that every national school could become self-supporting.

I can show that the principles which I am placing before the country are sound. If we wish to keep our schools "national", we must do both these things. Every teacher, who does not know spinning, carding, ginning and cotton-testing, should learn them. He should devote all his spare time to learning these things. If he himself does not know them, how will he teach them to his pupils? Some teachers may say that they will impart only knowledge of letters and that others should be employed to teach spinning and weaving. Just as all of us know how to eat and how to wear clothes, so also must we know spinning and other processes. Then alone can we set an example to a child.

So far all the money has been spent on colleges, *Vinay Mandirs* and schools for *Antyajas*. The Vidyapith has given no importance to primary schools. If we wish to give life to the principles which I

have stated, the Vidyapith should be turned into a school for khadi. Non-co-operation is a movement of the people. It is not meant for a few people. We want to bring life to crores of skeletons and cover them with flesh. We get food to eat, so there is flesh on us. We feel that we look all right. The skeletons in this country have no other covering except the skin. I have wept to see them. If you saw them, you also would weep and ask: "Is that the people's condition?"

How can a Bombay man know what a skeleton is? Our task is to bring awakening among the people. What matters it even if the newspapers are closed down? The common class of people do not read newspapers. They certainly read you and me. Place a pair of eyes before them, they will look at these alone. Take this to be gospel truth. If there is something in your eyes, the people will understand you and will dismiss the papers with a laugh.

If we wish to educate the masses, we may well give importance to the colleges but ultimately we must make them like *Gangotri*[1]. The pupils trained in them should, at the end of their training, take themselves to the villages. Train them with this idea in mind. Even if only a few come forward, it makes no difference.

It is the primary schools to which I attach importance. I want the Vidyapith to pay more attention to them and assume more responsibility for them. We should think how these schools should be run. I give my own idea. It is folly to imitate Government schools. Two years ago I had published some figures in *Young India*.[2] I had shown with their help that there were fewer schools in the Punjab now than 50 years ago. In Burma, too, there were schools everywhere and all children were given knowledge of the three R's. That condition does not obtain today, because the Government closed down what it considered to be primitive schools and started its own. How can it reach all the seven lakhs of villages? There are no schools in three lakhs out of those seven lakhs. In this sorry state of affairs, what is the point of starting schools on the Government pattern? We should manage without school buildings; we need only teachers of character. The teachers of old days were such men. They used to teach children and lived by begging. They would beg for flour, and would accept ghee if they got it. Where these teachers were not good, the edu-

[1] The source of the Ganges

[2] These figures occurred in the articles by Daulat Ram Gupta in the various issues between December 8, 1920, and January 26, 1921.

cation was not good; and where they were good, the education was good. All that is no more today. Education cannot be imparted by means of imposing buildings. If we are ready to go to the villages and live a simple life, doing the work of spinning, etc., then we may reach our goal. We may ask the Vidyapith to think about this, but it is not a body distinct from you or me. If some men draw up a scheme and place it before the Vidyapith and if a few self-sacrificing men are ready to live in the villages, subsisting on what little they get, then only will this be possible.

In a letter received by me and published in *Navajivan*, a teacher informs me that he started his work with three children. Today there are 96 children, 73 boys and 23 girls. He teaches them under a tree. They are not the children of Brahmins or *Vanias*. It is a school exclusively of *Antyajas*; can you and I not do what an *Antyaja* teacher could? Can we not find even *Antyaja* children? If we do not, we might experiment elsewhere. What I want to say is that we must pay serious attention to primary education.

I have been told that parents have tired of our educational programme. They are unhappy that the children are being educated through the mother tongue! I laughed on hearing this. The pain followed; when there is extreme suffering, one cannot cry, one laughs. What degeneration was this, I felt. The parents fear that their children will not be able to speak good English. They do not mind if they speak bad Gujarati. Has it ever occurred to them that, if they learn through Gujarati, they will bring a little of the education into their homes too? I myself do not know equivalents of technical terms in geometry, algebra and arithmetic. If I am asked to give a Gujarati word for "circle", I would have to pause and think. I know the English names of the different kinds of triangles, but do not know the Gujarati name of any one of them. What a situation! Personally, I would gladly have these parents look after their own children. Should I teach them through English and ask others for Gujarati equivalents? Should I establish a national school and collect funds to do this? I would, instead, start working myself and learn up all the equivalents, and then go ahead smoothly. We have not known of a single English scholar having experienced difficulties in regard to words in his own language. An Englishman named Spurgeon was not a great scholar, but, whenever he opened his mouth, it was simply a flow of words; he would amaze everybody by his fluent use of the most obscure technical words

relating to the navy. If I were to approach our biggest scholars, Narasinhrao[1] and Anandshankar[2] with such problems, wanting maliciously to test them, I could easily show that they had failed. If, in this pitiable situation, I am asked to teach through English, I would decline. I should of course admit that education through the mother tongue is not a necessary part of non-co-operation. If some parents ask me to teach their children good English, permitting me at the same time to teach them spinning, music, etc., I would certainly accept the bargain. I would teach English for four hours and make the children spin for a like duration. Even while teaching English, I would teach as much Gujarati as I can manage. To that extent I would be cheating the parents, and this because there could not but be some reservation in my mind about the arrangement. Even those who have passed M.A. write incorrect English and spell incorrectly.

I had wanted to speak at length about women's education. But this is a serious subject. In a sense, it has no bearing on our struggle. Of course, we do not want our women to remain uneducated. But what should be the method of education for them, at what point education for a girl should end and that for a woman should begin—this is a separate, a purely educational problem. At present, our approach to the problem is a limited one. For the time being I would get girls to attend primary schools and only make them turn the spinning-wheel. I have not thought about other complicated issues, though few others are likely to have made as many experiments in girls' education as I have. I have kept young boys and girls together while teaching them, and I do not regret having done so. True, I have burnt my fingers, but not too much, for I stood guard over them like a roaring lion. Please do not think, since I do not speak about the problem, that I make light of it.

I have drafted these resolutions[3] as reflecting the sum and substance of my thinking on this subject. Think them over. Do not accept them just because I have moved them. I attended the All-India Congress Committee, determined to have my resolutions accepted; here, on the other hand, I have placed these before you merely as so many recommendations. If you oppose these resolutions fearlessly, I shall not be hurt; but I shall be if there is hypocrisy, if a pledge is taken and then violated. Just

[1] Narasinhrao Divetia

[2] Anandshankar Dhruva

[3] *Vide* the following item.

now, there is no question of hypocrisy, for there has been no pledge.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 3-8-1924

269. *NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS*[1]

AHMEDABAD,
August 1, 1924

Resolution No. 1:—This Conference is of opinion that, since the object of establishing national schools is that they may help in winning swaraj and promote the Non-co-operation movement, the principles of non-co-operation should not at all be compromised in conducting these schools.

Resolution No. 2:—This Conference is of opinion that in running these schools importance should be attached not to the number of pupils but to their quality. Hence those boys and girls should be admitted whose parents subscribe to the principles which have been accepted as essential from the point of view of swaraj and non-co-operation, which means that:

1. those among them who are Hindus look upon the practice of untouchability as a sin and have no objection to their children sitting and studying with *Antyaja* children,
2. they welcome their children acquiring a knowledge of the craft of spinning, and
3. they have faith in the need and possibility of unity among Hindus, Muslims and Indians following other faiths.

Resolution No. 3:—This Conference is of opinion that the national schools should have teachers who believe in non-violence and truth and all items in the Non-co-operation programme as indispensable means for winning swaraj.

Resolution No. 4:—This Conference is of opinion that every teacher, whether man or woman, who does not already know it, should immediately learn to recognize the variety of cotton, to gin and card it, make slivers, spin and judge the count and the quality of yarn.

Resolution No. 5:—With a view to improving the teaching ability of primary school teachers, it is desirable that the Vidyapith should make the following provisions for their benefit:

[1] As president of the Conference, Gandhiji proposed these resolutions and initiated discussion on them.

1. to draw up a curriculum for them;
2. to hold a common test for them;
3. to hold a test every six months for newly-recruited teachers;
4. to start correspondence classes for teachers;
5. to make other similar provisions for improving their teaching ability.

Resolution No. 6:—Since non-co-operation is essentially a process of self-purification and since the Congress is striving to spread the principles of non-co-operation among villages and since it is the belief of this Conference that the process of self-purification in villages must necessarily begin with children, this Conference is of opinion that the Vidyapith should accord greater importance to primary education vis-a-vis higher and secondary education and should, therefore, spread it among villages, making such modifications in it as may appear necessary.

Resolution No. 7:—This Conference is of opinion that, in establishing national schools in rural areas, not the present-day Government schools but the old-time schools should be taken as the model and the national schools should be run on that pattern.

Resolution No. 8:—While complimenting the Vidyapith and other independent national bodies for their effort in publishing text-books with the praiseworthy object of giving impetus to national education, this Conference expresses its opinion that the Vidyapith and the other bodies concerned should pay more attention to the quality of text-books than to their number, and also that it is necessary in this connection to bear the country's poverty in mind.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 3-8-1924

270. *SPEECH AT NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE*[1]

August 2, 1924

We have had a good discussion on this resolution. I wish to pour cold water on the optimistic words uttered by Kaka Saheb. It is no use if you accept this resolution carried away by excitement. If we do not have the ability to implement this resolution, we should admit it. It is a sign of strength, not of weakness, to make such admission. If you wish to see a sample of weakness, then I am one. You can throw at me as many stones as you like. There is egotism and self-attachment in pretending to have what one does not have in oneself. Those who are not able to do as much as has been set down in this resolution should halt right here. The rest should offer cent per cent. I am here to accept only cent per cent compliance. If we advance without taking a measure of our strength, our condition will be like that of the textile mill which collapsed.[2] Since other buildings stood and this mill alone collapsed, there must have been some weak spot in it. We do not wish to be reduced to that state. Hence we wish to assess by means of this resolution how many soldiers of non-co-operation we have and how many of us believe in the principle of non-co-operation.

Truly speaking, the issue of principle is only indirectly involved, but the important things are only two: *Antyajas* and the spinning-wheel. Are we ready to accept them or not? One calls for a change of heart and risking one's means of livelihood. The other requires giving up sloth and being active. One who does not desire this, one who has no strength to do this, should have nothing to do with it.

The practice of untouchability in Hinduism is a great sin. With the passage of time it is being tested. There is no doubt at all in my mind that if Hinduism fails in this test, it will disappear from the world. The question before us is whether we should purify ourselves or become untouchables by keeping others as such. We have become untouchables in South Africa, East Africa and even here in India. Here we are prohibited from entering places reserved for the Britishers. The Britishers

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of the Conference. The speech was made when Gandhiji moved resolution No. 5.

[2] *Vide* "Accident in Mill", 3-8-1924.

have learnt this only after coming here. They saw that here people followed a queer religion, that one man touching another got polluted and so avoided even standing in the shadow of that person. They thought they too should behave in the same way, else they would expose themselves to danger. In this belief they established their own exclusive quarters. I do not at all feel that they are to blame for it. It is we ourselves who have taught them untouchability.

If you have strength of heart, you will even adopt the spinning-wheel and also choose children whom you can teach both these things. You will make them engrossed in these two things. If you can do these two things, it will be a great achievement. You should not worry about other things. Leave everything else to God. If you have strength in you, your way is clear.

What if your livelihood is endangered while doing so? We have been conducting the movement for swaraj precisely to create conditions in which our livelihood will not be jeopardized. We can consider that movement to have succeeded only when hundreds, thousands, lakhs of boys and girls will cease to worry and become unconcerned about their livelihood. In a country which enjoys freedom, boys and girls do not at all think of their livelihood while doing their duty. Nowhere else do we find such difficulty about earning one's livelihood as we do here. It is India's claim that it gives first place to activities concerning the *atman*. The fear of death and livelihood, which is found in this country making such a claim, is found nowhere else. I speak thus because I am a Hindu through and through. Why should we have any fear about our livelihood? We certainly have weaving as a means of livelihood. If that is not possible, we shall split wood, break and carry stones. If we go a step further and do the sacred work of cleaning latrines, we shall certainly get the Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 that we want, nay we shall be even wooed. Hence, truly speaking, we have no problem of livelihood. Those who want swaraj and yearn for it, those who feel that they should immolate themselves in this struggle, should certainly forget all about earning their livelihood. Then, what does it matter that one has to die of starvation, if one's parents, wife, and others remain hungry? It is a noble dharma for us to eat only after feeding others. Hence we should do our best and follow our dharma. The author of the *Mahabharata* has discussed, but could not decide, whether individual effort or destiny is more important. But we do see that everywhere our luck is always a pace or two ahead of us. It is our dharma to put forth our best endeavour. What egotism on our part to say,

"I shall get my sister married"! Who am I to provide food and clothing to my sister? If I die, what then? A man like me would leave a will saying "I leave behind me as a legacy to my sister not money but a spinning-wheel."

My intention was not to say words of encouragement, but only to pour cold water. But this I spoke unwittingly. If you are not prepared to do these two things, throw out this resolution. If you are ready, if you have the requisite strength, adopt it. If you do not adopt it, our work will not go on. Then we cannot tell the country that we in Gujarat have so many national schools and so many pupils.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-8-1924

271. *SPEECH AT NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE*[1]

August 2, 1924

Shri Chandulal has not understood what I said. This question is grave, important; it is too grave for this Conference to discuss. I was startled to hear the words of Padmabehn.[2] To me dancing girls are like sisters. Wherever I went, I have seen them and in future, too, I shall see them and place before them the spinning-wheel. My ideas have not grown weaker after I went to jail. I am too full of thoughts about women's education to be able to present them here. It is my contention that I have thought more about this matter than anyone else. I also maintain that this movement has brought about greater awakening among women than among others.

The spinning-wheel cannot but touch the hearts of women. That alone is their true education, the education of the heart. And what is the use of moving resolutions here about something which they are already doing? These resolutions are empty words. We do not see what grows in our own garden. Are we able to give better education over many years than that which

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of the Conference. The speech was made in connection with Chandulal Dave's resolution urging the National University at Ahmedabad to make some definite arrangements for the education of women.

[2] While seconding Chandulal Dave's resolution, she had said, "What will be our plight if Gandhiji who shows great sympathy for dancing girls would thus remain unmindful of us?"

makes a woman, who had been looked upon as uncultured and uneducated, discard her veil and come out in the open? Women's education is being carried on only because of this movement; nay, if women were not being educated, this movement would not have been possible.

The task of women's education is beyond the capacity of you, me and the entire community. To think about it is like pushing back the sea, it is like trying to grasp with one's hand the water of a mirage. To woman, the better half of man, who can impart education? What does it avail us if a few women become graduates of Karve University[1]? Education will not be imparted thereby. To know that a woman is more than a man is in itself true education.

We should sit down at leisure and think about it, we should discuss it with groups of persons. If you think that as Chancellor of the Vidyapith I must do something, then I should say that the burden which Shri Chandulal and others propose to impose on us is too heavy. We have neither the resources nor the number of women required therefor. The Chancellor entertains many expectations. But what can the poor man do? One cannot educate women by spending a few rupees and opening a few girls' schools. Hence I sit quiet. Our schools and colleges are of course willing to admit girls. The Vidyapith is willing to consider a plan if someone places it before it, but it will not draw up one itself. Those who are 'experts'[2] should take up the responsibility, present their ideas, cause a stir and join the managing committee. The Vidyapith does not want to shirk that work. But if someone presents any big plan of education connected with swaraj, the Vidyapith will certainly decline to consider it. The Vidyapith does not want to disregard this subject, does not want to forget it—I am only referring to the Vidyapith's inability. I myself am unable to give a thought to this resolution in a quarter of an hour. As a leader and soldier, I humbly request you, in order that we may not be objects of ridicule, to remove the suspicion that I have no interest in women's education and to withdraw this resolution.[3]

The credit for the work accomplished here is yours alone. You have crushed me under the weight of obligation; crush me

[1] S.N.D.T. Women's University, Poona, founded by D. K. Karve

[2] The English word is used in the original.

[3] At this point Chandulal Dave withdrew his resolution. Thereafter, winding up the proceedings of the Conference, Gandhiji made the remarks which follow.

more by implementing the resolutions. My only request to you is: do not leave the resolutions here, but take them with you. Reap sweet fruits by implementing them and feed Gujarat too with them. May God grant you the strength to do so.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-8-1924

272. INSTRUCTIONS ON LETTER FROM ERVINE BAKTAY[1]

[After *August 2, 1924*]

Ganesan's publications, *Y*[*oung*] *I*[*ndia*] may be sent including *Indian Home Rule*. *Y. I.* should be [sent] regularly and debited to Mr. Birla. The writer should be told not to worry about payment. He may either give free lectures or add to his earnings or do whatever use he wishes to make of it.

From a photostat of the original: S.N. 10091

273. ACCIDENT IN MILL

As the accident in Manasukhbhai's mill occurred in Ahmedabad itself, it touches our hearts. But we do not think at all, or think only for a fleeting instant, about the tragedy that has befallen Malabar.[2] If greater destruction of life and property than even that in Malabar took place outside India, it would have little impact on us. These accidents, however, tell us that there is no distinction at all between king and pauper, Brahmin and *Bhangi* and man and the lower creation. The acts of God affect all equally. Animals and men sailing in the same boat sink together. But man differentiates and saves one's relations and then, if possible, rescues the animals too. Some of

[1] Acknowledging Gandhiji's earlier letter of March 15, 1924 (*vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 246), Ervine Baktay wrote to Gandhiji on August 2 that he had been asked by people deeply interested in Gandhiji's work to deliver some lectures on Indian questions pertaining to religion, history, literature, etc. He also wrote: "I sorely need some books written by you. I have only *Ethical Religion*. Yet I would like to get your other books too, which I would order directly from the Editor — if I had the sufficient sum to pay for them. But I earn my living with my literary work and this brings rather small material results."

[2] *Vide* "Floods in Malabar", 10-8-1924.

those saved may die the next day, and even those who survive pass away after a few days. Death spares no one. Why should we not embrace it gladly then? May not death be our greatest friend, a saviour who sets us free from much suffering? God is certainly not cruel, and He would not, like Nero, torture creatures for His pleasure or send them into the world and then kill them. There is a design in all His works.

But should we, philosophizing thus, sit quiet? Not at all. We should ever be ready for death, and it is only by shedding the fear of death that we can discover the means of saving others from the pain they suffer. We are in the same boat as all others. We have no right to think that, because death is a friend, a person may die today rather than tomorrow. Strange are the ways of Yamaraj[1]. If we knew the exact moment of our death, we would not suffer at all [through fear of it]. There would be no question of helping anyone. We suffer, however, because we do not know that moment. We are not men of knowledge; if, nevertheless, we act as if we were, we would fall into degradation. Thinking philosophically, we may remain calm, but should never forget to help one another. In not forgetting that consists true preparation for meeting death.

As for the accident in Ahmedabad, we may assume that the mill-owners will send help to the relations of the dead. It is their duty to do so, more than that of others. But how did this accident take place? We see that modern buildings are comparatively weak. Contractors, workmen and others cheat a lot. Sand is used in place of cement and often bricks are so brittle that they crumble into powder. They use weak timber and, for mortar, employ a mixture of earth and cowdung in place of lime. Engineers, too, are satisfied with the minimum degree of strength in order to please owners. On account of such practices, many houses have collapsed in Bombay, burying people to death. I hope the mill-owners will institute full inquiries into the construction of the building and publish an authoritative statement explaining the reasons for the accident and thus satisfy the citizens. We should also hope that owners of other big buildings will get them inspected and have them repaired wherever they notice weak points.

The havoc in Malabar is like a fire in the sea and it is beyond the means of any private organization to relieve the people's

[1] God of death

suffering. If, at such a time, Congressmen offer their services to relief committees seeking to help the people, one need not think that they will be violating the principles of non-co-operation. If we had inexhaustible funds, we could set up a separate body and help people. But in a situation in which even lakhs of rupees are far too little, what can the poor Congress do? If, therefore, the Government gives some help and accepts our services in its effort, we should certainly offer them.

Every worker, however, should remember that true service does not require money. It consists in work sincerely done. The service done by the expression of love in one's eyes or the right word uttered at the proper time cannot be rendered with money. The help rendered by meeting homeless men and women, by serving them and helping them in small things in a variety of ways, by comforting them through our mere presence, is incomparable. We cannot have too many silent workers giving such help. Everyone can compete in this field and no one will obstruct another. It is desirable, therefore, that Congress bodies should not in this situation lose heart for want of funds. This is the reply I have given to Congressmen from Malabar who asked me for help. When I received the first telegram, I thought that we might collect some money and send it. I even sought a friend's help. He sent me Rs. 250. But later, when I read the news about the vastness of the tragedy, my heart sank. I saw that this work was beyond the capacity of a man like me, that it was beyond the capacity of the Congress either. All the same, if anyone sends me money, I shall certainly pass it on to office-bearers of Congress committees. I was against sending financial help from outside for the Vaikom Satyagraha. On this occasion, I consider it our duty to send help if we can. The obstacle lies in our inability, not want of will. Thinking it wise to keep quiet in a situation in which we may wish to do what only an emperor can, but are as helpless as a pauper, I have advised, in my second telegram, the office-holders of the local Congress committees to be content with giving physical services and helping, if possible, through Government agencies as well.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 3-8-1924

274. *MY NOTES*

Satyagraha in East Africa

A correspondent living in East Africa writes:[1]

A similar picture has been painted by another person also. There must be, therefore, some truth in what he says. A struggle in which even a few went to jail with pure hearts cannot fail altogether. But, to the people, it will seem to have failed as long as discriminatory laws remain unrepealed. The correspondent has pointed out good reasons for the failure. The community must remove them. But those who believe that satyagraha is a means merely of harassing the Government commit a serious error. The aim of satyagraha is self-purification. The harassment which naturally follows our doing our duty cannot be helped. But our aim should not be harassment. If drink addicts give up drinking, the owners of liquor-booths will indeed suffer, but the aim of those who give up drinking is not to make them suffer. Their aim can be to reform the owners as well. But, undoubtedly, it is wrong to boycott those who do not join satyagraha. That will harm the movement, not help it. A satyagrahi should rely only on his own truth and on his capacity to bear suffering, that is, for *tapascharya*. He need not be concerned if others do not follow him. People do not join him for lack of faith or of strength. Experience alone removes lack of faith. Strength comes from example. In neither case is coercion justified.

To Non-co-operators of Gujarat

I have often admitted that it is the fault of the non-co-operators that they have not been able to win the love of the co-operationists. But that does not give either the right to harm the country. At the beginning of 1922, many co-operationists were willing to do khadi work. Quite a few among them had come to believe that the economic condition of the country could certainly be improved through khadi. The matter rested there. Now, when an attempt is being made to revive the spinning-wheel movement vigorously, I ventured to seek once again the help of the co-operationists. What should a beggar be ashamed of? Co-operationists and non-co-operators may certainly

[1] The letter is not translated here.

have different ideas of duty to the country. The Hindu strives in one way to attain *moksha*, the Muslim in another. That is no reason why they should fight. Both are right from their own points of view. But we believe that our political emancipation consists in their practising mutual tolerance.

Similarly, non-co-operators and co-operationists should tolerate each other, both parties working according to their own lights. Where, moreover, both agree in their ideas, why should they not work together? I have heard it said that as long as I regard the spinning-wheel as an instrument of non-co-operation, co-operationists will not help in that programme. Why should it be so? Just because I see Rama, that is dharma, in the spinning-wheel, should others who may look upon it as a means of producing yarn, i.e., wealth, keep away from it? The spinning-wheel as such suggests neither Rama nor yarn. The person who works it produces yarn and, therefore, sees that in it. A person like me may invest it with significance as symbolizing the spirit of non-co-operation. But I myself have said that once the the spinning-wheel has become universal, the need for non-co-operation will disappear. Why should not the co-operationists help in bringing this about?

But the responsibility lies wholly with the non-co-operators. The gulf between co-operationists and non-co-operators is the result of the latter's mistakes. It is for us, then, to bridge that gulf. It is with that aim that I am addressing this request to co-operationists, suggesting to other non-co-operators by what I am doing that they should appeal to co-operationists with whom they come into contact to take up spinning. They should teach them spinning if they do not know it. It is not as if only those who joined the Congress had the duty of spinning. It is the duty of every Indian. We should, therefore, entreat co-operationists with all love to start spinning. We should not feel hurt if they do not listen to us. We should renew the request when we get another opportunity, and have confidence that, if the spinning-wheel possesses the power we think it does and if there is no anger in us, the co-operationists are sure to take up the spinning-wheel.

A Persevering Teacher

This letter[1] is from a teacher of an *Antyaja* school in Botad. How good it would be if all schools could run as this one does!

Correction

A correspondent from Rangoon writes:

[1] Not translated here

> In your "Satyagraha in South Africa"[1] you have described the late Seth Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia as a Memon from Surat. This is not correct. You should have described him as a Sunni Bohra gentleman of Surat district.

I knew that Mr. Ahmed Cachalia belonged to the Sunni sect but, as Sunni Bohras from the Surat side were known in South Africa as Memons from Surat, I described him in that way.

Earning through Weaving

A correspondent writes:[2]

I agree with what he suggests I should state. I still believe that one can certainly earn more than Rs. 10 a month if the hand-spun yarn is of uniform quality. I believe that if a clever, that is, educated and hard-working, weaver gets yarn spun on order, buys it up and weaves it, he will certainly earn more. But it is true that one who wants to make money should not take up weaving of hand-spun yarn. This work is a great experiment for the country. Only the brave will undertake it. I am sure of this, that those who engage in it will certainly not starve.

A Conversation with Me

A correspondent has sent me a printed report of a conversation I had with a swami about untouchability, and asks me if there is any truth in it. I read that report and was pained by it. I see merely a half-truth in almost every line of it. My statements have been altogether distorted. My views about untouchability have received such wide publicity that it is not necessary to discuss them here again. But it is my request to all those who come to see me not to publish any report of the conversations they have with me, or, if they do want to publish a report, they should read out the draft to me first and then publish it. To readers my request is that any views attributed to me in a report should not be regarded as mine unless the report is authorized by me.

So many men and women come and see me. If I were to read all that they write about me or my views or take upon myself the responsibility of correcting the inaccuracies in their reports, I would have to spend much of my time in that work only. I am sure no one wants my time to be wasted in this manner. I myself am not at all prepared so to waste it. Hence, for all those who

[1] Which appeared serially in *Navajivan* from April 1924 to November 1925

[2] The letter is not translated here.

have some pity for me, the best way is not to publish any report of a conversation with me. Even those who have none should not publish their conversation with me, for, in their unkindness, they will not understand me. Should, however, some unkind friend not pay attention to my request, wise readers should not credit what they write.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 3-8-1924

275. *TELEGRAM TO SAROJINI NAIDU*[1]

August 4, 1924

DEVI SAROJINI
TAJMAHAL
BOMBAY

HEALTH ALL RIGHT. FRIDAY EARLY ENOUGH. HOW ARE YOU PADMAJA.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10094

276. *TELEGRAM TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN*[2]

August 4, 1924

HAKIM SAHEB AJMALKHAN
SHRINAGAR

HEALTH ALL RIGHT. AM CLOSE TOUCH MAHOMED ALI. HE SAYS PRESENCE UNNECESSARY YET. HOW ARE YOU DAUGHTER. DO NOT WANT COMMENCE TRAVEL TILL END MONTH UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10096

[1] This was in reply to Sarojini Naidu's telegram of August 4, which read: "Wire health. Shall spend Friday, Saturday Ahmedabad unless required earlier."

[2] This was in reply to Hakim Ajmal Khan's telegram of August 4, which read: "Wire health. When visiting Delhi where your presence badly wanted."

277. LETTER TO INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI

Sravana Sud 4 [August 4, 1924][1]

CHI. INDRA,

Received your letter. Do you wish to drag me out of my sphere of work? What can I write about Shivaji Maharaj? I feel ashamed to say that I know nothing more than what I read about him in my student days.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI
"ARJUN"
DELHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4859. Courtesy: Chandragupta Vidyalankar

278. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Sravana Sud 4 [August 4, 1924][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Your health will improve to the extent you stop worrying. You should take black raisins or big-size red currants after soaking them overnight in water. Clean and soak them. You should heat and drink the surplus water left after absorption by the raisins. It would be good to heat it even with the currants. I am making arrangements for Hajira.

Blessings from
BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 452. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] & [2] The postmarks bear the date August 5, 1924.

279. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Sravana Sud 4 [August 4, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have your letters. Mahadev tells me that Swami immediately returned to you your article on Simla. I wonder why it has not reached you. I shall ask Swami. If I could possibly go to Simla I would do so, merely to meet Panditji[2] and you, if for nothing else. I would very much wish to go to Srinagar, but as the saying goes, "nobody would be unhappy if everybody could have his way" and so on. Did I not write to you that, after my apologizing for the use of the word *talleen* [absorbed], Anandshankarbhai wrote to me a sweet letter to say that my use of the word was correct. Words with a repetitive meaning are thus used. However, I shall make the necessary correction in regard to the word *aavkardayak* [welcome]. I shall also make use of the passage from *Ayurveda*[3]. I have no fever at all.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

V. G. DESAI
STERLING CASTLE
SIMLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6020. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] The postmark bears the date August 5, 1924.
[2] Madan Mohan Malaviya
[3] Hindu system of medicine

280. TELEGRAM TO GENERAL SECRETARY, A.I.C.C., ALLAHABAD[1]

August 5, 1924

WIRED BOTH LAST WEEK FLOODS TOO VAST FOR CONGRESS CAPACITY. WE SHOULD CO-OPERATE WITH NEUTRAL AGENCY EVEN GOVERNMENT IF THEY ACCEPT SERVICE. PERSONAL SERVICE CAN AND MUST ALWAYS BE GIVEN. IF CONGRESS CAN IT MAY RAISE SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10097

281. TRIBUTE TO ANNIE BESANT[2]

SABARMATI,
August 6, 1924

As everyone knows, it is my misfortune to hold certain views as to policies and principles fundamentally different from Dr. Annie Besant's. But that fact does not in any way detract from my regard for her as a woman of high character, noble purpose, ceaseless energy and indomitable courage. She loves India with the devotion of a daughter. Her industry and application are the envy of us all. Her courage never shone so brilliant as when, at the risk of losing popularity, she opposed Non-co-operation. May she be long spared to serve India and humanity.

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from the General Secretary of the Congress, Allahabad, dated August 4, which read: "Srinivas Iyengar proposes immediate grant fifty thousand for flood relief. Rajagopalachari requests conversion Tamil loan fifteen thousand to grant to enable give help floods. All-India funds now one lakh twenty-five thousand fixed deposit, twenty-two thousand current account, twelve thousand liabilities. Wire opinion both request."

[2] This was sent on the occasion of the completion of fifty years of her public service.

282. *LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN*

August 6, 1924

DEAR MR. NATARAJAN[1],

I thank you for your letter. I did see the cutting you have kindly sent me. I felt like shooting the reporter when I saw the wire. But as it is against my creed to do so, I subsided and believed that no sane man or woman could credit me with any such absurd remark.[2] There is no mention of the wheel in any of my wires. How can there be? The wheel may assist when the people have settled down on dry land and have recovered from the nervous prostration that must have overtaken thousands of our countrymen.[3] What I did say to the people of Ahmedabad was that the work was beyond the capacity of any private agency, but that, if they would send me money, I would see that it went to the proper quarters. I added that all of the hearers, rich and poor, could spin for their naked countrymen and women, and send me the yarn and I would undertake to see that it was utilized for the relief of the sufferers. The fact is the news has stunned me. I am fretting with myself for our utter incapacity when nature delivers her stunning blows. It is my unquenchable belief in the utter goodness of the Deity that makes me hope for good even out of this seeming calamity and prevents me from becoming a raving maniac.[4]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Editor, *The Indian Social Reformer*, Bombay
[2] *Vide* "Interview to Associated Press of India", 7-8-1924.
[3] The reference is to the floods in Malabar in July 1924.
[4] On August 8, this letter was read out by the addressee at a public meeting presided over by G. K. Parekh.

283. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Sravana Sud 6 [*August 6, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

Swami says that your article, "Swaraj in Simla",[2] has already been sent to you. It seems it has been lost; you had better write it again. The servant of a foreign-cloth merchant cannot forsake the relatives of those who wear foreign cloth. It would have been better if you had kept up your practice of correcting errors. It would be desirable that you do it even now. Why can't you decide which articles in *Navajivan* should be translated into English?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

V. G. DESAI
STERLING CASTLE
SIMLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6021. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

284. BELOW THE BELT

What has been said about the Government so often is being proved again and again, viz., that, no matter what it grants to popular clamour, it always insists on having its way by hook or by crook. The Press Law is gone only to be replaced by new activities under the laws of sedition and libel. Everything the Government were able to do under the Press Law is now being done without it and without difficulty. The extraordinary judgment given against the *Chronicle* does but confirm this view. It is difficult to believe that a public servant can possibly bring an action for damages for comment upon his acts as such made by a journalist in the discharge of his profession. I understand that the case against the *Chronicle* is not the first of its kind. The *Bande Mataram* and the *Zamindar* of Lahore had to pay damages under similar circumstances.

[1] From the reference to the article on Simla, it is evident that the letter was written in 1924. In that year *Sravana Sud* 6 fell on August 6. *Vide* also "Letter to V. G. Desai", 4-8-1924.

[2] The title of the article was "Simla under Swaraj".

Which is worse? Forfeiture under the defunct law or damages under a libel suit? After the result of the *Chronicle* case, who can dare criticize frankly and freely the acts of Government servants? The editor of a daily newspaper, when he begins writing his leading article, does not weigh his words in golden scales. He may be betrayed into a hasty word. Must he pay for it even though it did it obviously in good faith, without malice and in the public interest? The writer in the *Chronicle* certainly did not know Mr. Painter and had no more interest in maligning him than the learned judge himself who has awarded what I venture to regard as vindictive damages.

The public will refuse to believe that Mr. Painter had suffered anything because of the *Chronicle* comments. But I make bold to think that he has lost more in public estimation by his victory than by the *Chronicle* comment. He has cleared nothing by getting a verdict against the *Chronicle*. But he has shown that he is not capable, in a sportsman-like manner, of standing strong public criticism. I feel sorry for him.

What, however, I am concerned about is the position of journalists in view of this case. One is not always able to prove one's convictions and, if one is to criticize public acts and their doers, it is necessary to set forth one's convictions without being called upon always to prove them. For instance, I feel morally certain that the judgment of the judge in Sir Sankaran Nair's case was warped.[1] I am morally certain that the judge was politically biassed in favour of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. And yet, if what I have said be regarded libellous and if the judge sent me notice of action, I should have to tender a humble, abject and unconditional apology for having expressed my candid opinion in the interest of public good. I should have to tender the apology because I could not prove what I have stated.

Mr. Painter is but an unconscious pawn in the big game. This Government is making hay while the sun shines upon it. We seem to be disorganized—a house divided against itself. Hindus and Mussalmans would gladly continue to indulge in the pleasant pastime of breaking one another's heads. Civil disobedience is a far-off cry. Whilst we are fighting among ourselves, the Government is consolidating its power in every possible manner. We may not blame it. It is perfectly natural for it. These libel actions are calculated to demoralize Indian journalism and make public criticism over-cautious and timid. I am no lover of irrespon-

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 12-6-1924.

sible or unjustifiably strong criticism. But the caution to be beneficial must come from within, not [be] superimposed from without.

One thing is clear to me. If we have lost ground by our dissensions, political or religious, the Government have lost more by its taking advantage of our misfortunes and by seeking to punish innocent criticism of public officers for their public conduct, by inducing or permitting the latter to embark upon libel actions. We may feel too paralysed for immediate effort, but every act of the Government which is meant to take a mean advantage of our weakness and every hit below the belt does but intensify our opposition to it. The paralysis will be short-lived, the opposition must be co-terminous with the existence of the system which makes our unfortunate position possible.

Young India, 7-8-1924

285. TEACHERS IN CONFERENCE

The Gujarat Vidyapith has at the present moment nearly 30,000 children in its national schools who are being taught by over 800 teachers in nearly 140 institutions, of which two are colleges and one devoted to ancient research. The figures include also 13 high schools, 15 middle schools, 15 special schools for untouchables teaching over 300 boys and girls. The number of girls studying in these institutions are [*sic*] not more than 500. The Vidyapith has acquired a plot of land and has already erected a fine boarding house which is to serve the purpose also of lecture rooms till a separate building is erected. These figures do not include the national schools not affiliated to the Vidyapith. Nor do they represent the highest watermark. That was reached in 1921. Several schools have since closed, some others are likely to close in course of time. The attendance, too, is not on the increase. Gujarat like every other province has suffered from the general depression in the Congress ranks.

Notwithstanding the depression, however, the record is highly creditable to Gujarat which was, and probably still is, educationally, one of the most backward of our provinces. Measured by the swaraj standard, the experiment may not be regarded as an achievement; but, judged by itself, the experiment is an amazing record of progress for its four years' existence. It shows considerable organizing power, financial ability and faith in non-co-operation regarding education. I can say all this with complete detachment as, though resident in Gujarat, I have lived

least in it whilst the experiment was in progress and had no hand in working it. The credit belongs solely to Vallabhbhai and his very able lieutenants. During the stormiest and the longest period, I was resting in Yeravda and, therefore, was not available even as an adviser.

No wonder, then, that the teachers met in conference last week and, whilst taking stock of their position and shaping their future policy, wanted me to guide their deliberations. I wish that I could have done better justice to the task entrusted to me. My indifferent health and my heavy preoccupations rendered previous study and preparation (adequate for the purpose) impossible.

Whilst I was able heartily to congratulate the numerous teachers who attended the conference on the success that the figures I have quoted signified, I had to point out the serious and obvious flaws and weaknesses of the several institutions they were conducting. National schools, to be worth the name in terms of swaraj, for the attainment of which they were brought into existence, must be conducted with a view to advancing the national programme in so far as it was applicable to educational institutions. Thus, for instance, national schools must be the most potent means of propagating the message of the charkha, of bringing Hindus, Mussalmans and others closer together and of educating the untouchables and abolishing the curse of untouchability from the schools. Judged by this standard, the experiment must be pronounced, if not a failure, certainly a very dismal success. Out of 30,000 boys and girls, hardly one thousand are spinning on 100 charkhas at the rate of 1/2 hour per day. Hundreds of charkhas are lying idle and neglected. Whilst in theory the schools are open to the untouchables, very few, as a matter of fact, have untouchable children in them. The Mussalman attendance at the schools is poor. I had, therefore, no hesitation in advising that now we were to strive not after quantity but quality. The test for admission must be progressively stiffer. Parents who did not like their children to learn spinning or to mix with untouchable children might, if they chose, withdraw them. I had no hesitation in advising that teachers should run the risk of closing down their schools if the condition of running them required the exclusion of untouchables and the charkha. It was not enough to tolerate untouchable children if they stole in, but it was necessary to draw them into our schools by loving care and attention. The teachers were not to wait for Mussalman and Parsi parents to send their

children, but it was necessary to invite such parents to send their children. A national teacher must become a swaraj missionary within his own sphere. He should know the history of every child under his care and know the children not in his schools. He should know their parents and understand why they did not send their children to his school. He would do all this work not in an intolerant spirit but lovingly. Thus and thus only would national schools be truly national in terms of the Congress resolution.

The difficulty of the task is unmistakable. This Government has made everything mercenary. Character is no test for anything. Mechanical ability to go through a superficial syllabus is the sole test. Every profession has been degraded to mean a career. We become lawyers, doctors and schoolmasters not to serve our countrymen, but to bring us money. The Vidyapith, therefore, had to recruit for teachers in such a soul-killing atmosphere. The majority of the teachers have had to rise superior to themselves and their surroundings. The wonder is that they have at all responded to the call of the country.

But, now, after nearly four years' experience, we must turn over a new leaf. We cannot afford to remain at a standstill and not sink. We must, therefore, insist upon the boys and girls plying the charkha for at least half an hour daily. It is an education of no mean sort for thirty thousand boys and girls and eight hundred teachers to be spinning, i.e., labouring for the country for half an hour every day. It is a daily practical lesson in patriotism, useful toil and giving. That a boy should begin giving even during his education without expectation of return is an object-lesson in sacrifice he will not forget in after-life. And to the nation it means a gift of 1,875 maunds of yarn per month. It will supply at least one dhoti each to 5,000 men. Apart from every other consideration, let every teacher work out the value of the lesson learnt by each child in thinking that he or she with five others may be spinning in one month yarn enough for supplying one dhoti to each of his countrymen rendered naked during the recent floods in Madras.

The reason, however, for the ill success of the constructive part of the Congress programme in the national schools must be told. Painful discovery is being made that we who are the chosen of the people have not even learnt spinning. The schoolmasters as a class have hitherto taken no steps to qualify themselves as carders and spinners. No wonder if they are not then able to enthuse their pupils and if the charkhas are everywhere conspicuous by their absence.

It is, however, most gratifying that resolutions suggested for remedying the defect were all adopted by an overwhelming majority. Industrial occupation for teachers and pupils is a new thing for us. The want of response is, therefore, perhaps natural. But now that the teachers have adopted the resolutions, it would be a serious reflection upon them if they fail to live up to them. If the teachers will it, I do not doubt that the majority of the parents will not grumble about their children learning the noble art of spinning and giving half an hour each daily to the nation and sitting side by side with untouchable children. And what Gujarat teachers have resolved to do will, I hope, be adopted by the national teachers throughout the country.

Young India, 7-8-1924

286. NOTES

A Difficulty

A Hubli correspondent writes:

> There used to be eleven members on the Managing Body of the Hubli Taluka Congress Committee. The complete Managing Committee should according to the rules of the constitution of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee, consist of 10 members at the least.
>
> As soon as the Ahmedabad resolutions were passed 9 out of these eleven members resigned as they could not conform to the recommendations of the resolutions.
>
> The General Body of the Hubli Taluka Congress Committee consists of only 1,000 members out of a total population of 1,50,000 in the Taluka. A meeting of this body was held on the 9th instant. Only 24 persons attended. The meeting accepted the resignations as there was no possibility of inducing the members to withdraw the same on any grounds. The meeting then authorized the remaining two members of the Managing Body, i.e., the Vice-President, Mr. Visanji Shet, and the Secretary, Dr. Hardikar, to carry on its work till such time as the vacancies may be filled up. The meeting resolved that the next meeting of the General Body should be called in the last week of July, 1924, for the purpose of electing members to the vacancies on the Managing Body.
>
> This meeting came off yesterday, July 27, 1924. Full publicity was given to this meeting by handbills and even by approaching individually many families in the town and explaining the Ahmedabad Resolutions. In spite of all this, only 30 persons attended the meeting from out of 1,000 members. Though given to understand that another matter they had to

consider was the election of 10 members to the Dharwar District Congress Committee before the 10th of August, as the meeting of that body was to be held on that date, the meeting adjourned the consideration of the item of electing its Managing Body members; neither did it elect representatives to the District Committee. The members that were present did not think that it would be proper to take the responsibility of electing the representatives for 1,000 persons to the District Committee. Nor did the nominations of persons fulfilling the Ahmedabad recommendations come up. The meeting therefore adjourned the consideration of these items *sine die*.

The conditions here are:

1. The General Body members never assemble more than 25 or 30 strong nowadays.
2. They are not yet decided as to shouldering the responsibility of acting for 1,000 members.
3. If they want to elect representatives satisfying the Ahmedabad recommendations, there are no such persons coming up for working on the representative organizations.
4. If any election to these bodies is to take place, it can only be of those persons who will not be able to conform to the Ahmedabad recommendations *in toto*.
5. Hence the General Body will have to elect only such persons as can come up to do Congress work and will conform to the recommendations as far as possible.

   (The boycotts can be carried out by many of the representatives here if litigation in Government courts and boycott of Government educational institutions is excluded.)
6. Therefore, the Congress Committee will have either to suspend its work till such time as the All-India Cngress Committee withdraws its drastic recommendations or continue in a state of inaction and lifelessness till some future date which is not in sight. And it appears that the General Body is bent upon doing the latter as was demonstrated in yesterday's meeting.

In my opinion, the whole of the difficulty arises from inability to understand the implications of the A.I.C.C. resolutions. The nine gentlemen have certainly done well in resigning. If they have not retired in disgust but in a sportsman-like spirit, they can assist without being officials and help to conduct even the new elections so as to get properly-qualified persons elected. If, however, they do not believe in the boycotts, they should offer themselves for re-election, boldly try to convert the electors to their views and invite them to elect them. The whole situation rests with the electors if the committee at Hubli is a living organization. The A.I.C.C. resolution in question

was passed in order to give the electors guidance but not to fetter their choice. They have a perfect right to elect those who do not believe either wholly or partially in the present Congress policy. In properly conducted elections, it is the only honest method of sounding the country's opinion. We shall never know the real mind of the country or make any real headway unless we conduct election in the proper spirit. Let the Hubli committee register the names of those who subscribe to the Congress creed and pay 4 annas and let them elect whom they choose. These will be the proper representatives whether they believe in the Congress programme or whether they do not. I have been asked whether one man can pay for hundred men and get their names registered. I would call this buying votes and, therefore, dishonest. The idea is to get those men and women who themselves *pay* 4 annas for membership. If these real electors, after having had the pros and cons of the programme placed before them, decline to elect any but those who believe in the programme and if only a few can be found ready to serve on those terms, I should have no hesitation in working the programme with those few representatives. There is no other way of working out results of policies and principles in a scientific and true spirit.

For Famine Relief

In support of my proposition that the spinning-wheel is the most potent instrument of famine relief, the secretary, Tamil Nad Khadi Board, writes:

> It may not perhaps be accurate to describe the Coimbatore District as 'poor'. But it is mostly a 'dry' district and a failure of the monsoons, as happened last year, necessarily involves a famine. At the end of the last year there was intense famine. Cattle were available gratis. Spinning was the easiest and most natural occupation the women could turn to and thousands of women besieged the khadi producers for cotton. The latter gave to as many as possible and, as a consequence, in the months of November and December, all the invested capital had been locked up in khadi to nearly 75,000 rupees worth. The producers had to stop production in February when the members of the Khadi Board were on tour in these parts. I have been a personal witness to the great misery of the village folk, when they heard that merchants had stopped issuing cotton. I am glad to report that we have turned the corner and the production is again in full swing.
>
> Even at this early stage, the price of Tiruppur khaddar is not prohibitive. It is from 8 to 9 annas per square yard. This is chiefly due to

the fact that only the best cotton is used and, as you are aware, good cotton has been selling at fancy prices for the last one year. With the fall of cotton prices, the price per square yard may be lowered to 7 or even 6 annas. Its texture, I can confidently assert, compares favourably with the mill-cloth.

What a Brahmin Says

A friend sends the following which will be read with interest:

I am a Brahmin born and bred in Konkan. During the first thirteen years of my life, I may be said to have exclusively lived in villages and, for seven years after that, divided my time between villages and cities. My great-grandfather died an ascetic; my grandfather was so strict in his Brahmin observances that he bathed even on the day of his death. My father used to recite two chapters of *Gita* every day besides the whole of *Rudri*, the lengthy scriptural prayer to God Shankara. On Mondays and especially *Sravana* Mondays, he would be reciting it for eight to ten hours in the presence of our village Shankara. I did not know the scripture in the beginning when I was drenching the 'Linga' with at least five hundred *ghadas* of water during those hours. I am narrating these facts only to prove that I was not born or bred in Anglicized or civilized atmosphere but in a *dharmik* one.

In that atmosphere I was taught that it brought spiritual welfare to be able to spin sufficient yarn for my sacred threads. My grandfather, my father and my uncles all used to spin. My spiritual preceptor used to spin all the while that he was teaching me *sandhya* or *Rudri*. We had a cotton tree of our own. We made slivers in the crudest fashion. I had a great hankering for spinning. The spindle was a most inefficient variety. A thin sticklet passed through a hole bored in the centre of a pice that had got too smooth to be current was my spindle. We called it *chatee*.

I have to say much the same thing of our women. Women, and especially widows, who in those days had no aim except to get spiritual benefit, went to listen to *kathas* and *Puranas*. While they listened, they spun yarn with their fingers alone which they collected round the neck of a small earthen pot. That yarn was then twisted into wicks which were soaked in ghee and burnt as an oblation to earn merit (*punya*) in the eyes of God. The spinning not only did not lower those women, but gave those ladies a higher Brahminic and religious position.

My only object in saying these things is to prove that spinning does not at all convert the Brahmin into a Vaisya. I am a Chitpavan Brahmin belonging to the Ratnagiri District.

'Faulty Production'?

A sober friend writes:

> In the last issue of *Young India* you have referred to over-production of khadi and to the necessity of organizing sales. You have also expressed a desire that cities like Bombay may take over surplus stock. But, if there is lack of organization for sales, is not the system of production faulty? Khadi even today is much dearer than mill-cloth and it is doubtful if it lasts sufficiently long to balance its costliness. At present only those who are swayed by strong sentiment and who have spare money with them can indulge in the luxury of khadi. Your note suggests a sort of bounty. But what can bounty by itself achieve? It will fail in its object if the system of production is defective. If one rightly interprets your utterances, the charkha movement aims at making villages self-sufficient so far as cloth is concerned; that is to say every cottage should spin for itself. But can it be said that the production is increasingly carried on in this direction? How many villages have become self-sufficient or are about to be so?
>
> If, as you suggest, interprovincial khadi trade is not desirable, equally it is undesirable to collect and stock khadi in towns for the simple reason that its comparative dearness makes its disposal uneconomical. Disposal is made possible by appeals to feelings which is not always the right way.

Khadi is only seemingly dear. I have pointed out in these pages that it is wrong to compare khadi with other cloth by comparing the prices of given lengths. The cheapness of khadi consists in the revolution of one's taste. The wearing of khadi replaces the conventional idea of wearing clothes for ornament by that of wearing them for use. Opinion is divided as to the want of durability of khadi. Division of opinion is based probably on difference of experience. Different experience is inevitable so long as we have not arrived at uniformity in spinning. Four years' spasmodic effort is surely not enough to standardize the quality of hand-spun yarn. Every infant industry must struggle in the beginning. The sobriety of the friend disregards sentiment. But sentiment is a most powerful factor in the world. We cook our meals in our homes not because home-cooking is cheap according to the modern science of economy, but because there is an age-long sentiment behind it. Even school-boy economists could show that, when you count the cost, labour, fuel and wear and tear of utensils and rent, hotel food is cheaper than home-cooked. It is necessary to provide bounty for the khadi at the present moment. As Acharya Ray has very properly pointed out in his recent manifesto, what the State will not do must be done by the patriotic sentiment of the people. The

object of the khadi movement is correctly stated by the writer. And that object can be fully achieved if we who desire to serve the masses realize the need of the spinning-wheel and cultivate a taste for it and its production. If I throw the wheel at skeletons of Orissa, they will not look at it. But if I begin spinning in their midst, they will take to it like fish to water. The masses do as the great ones do, not as they preach. Hence the necessity for the spinning resolution. It gives us a real sense of responsibility towards the villages, it fills the air with the spinning taste and cheapens khadi. If the spinning resolution is faithfully carried out by the country, it has a potency of which we have as yet no conception.

A Homily

> You are already in a mood to flatter the Mohammedans and it seems as though you think, by exonerating them from their high-handedness, you can keep them in close touch with the Hindus. You must now learn to distribute blame among the parties involved, as justice requires it, as this policy of seeking to blame the weak and meek members of the nation and flattering the strong and high-handed element is by no means a wise policy.

This is but an extract from a long homily addressed to me by a Hindu friend. I know that many other Hindus think like this friend. The truth, however, is that, in an atmosphere surcharged with suspicion and passion, my impartiality is bound to be mistaken for partiality. Those Hindus who refuse to see anything good in Islam or Mussalmans are naturally shocked to find any defence of Islam or its votaries. I remain unmoved and unperturbed. For I know that some day my Hindu critics will admit the correctness of my estimate. They will perhaps admit that there will be no unity unless each party is prepared to understand, appreciate and make allowances for the other's view-point and even weaknesses. This requires a large heart, otherwise called charity. Let us do unto others as we would that they should do unto us.

Doings in Delhi

A letter received from Maulana Mahomed Ali shows that he is making every effort to secure perfect reconciliation between the various parties in Delhi, and is hopeful of success. He is also trying to fix up an inquiry. It requires very delicate handling. There is so much mutual distrust that the Maulana Saheb says there are some people who do not want any inquiry at all. He is carrying on all these negotiations although he is so ill that he has to lie on his back practically through the whole of his time and has

to be carried about in a *doli*[1] from place to place. Let us hope and pray that the Maulana Saheb will soon regain his health so as to be able to do justice to the very heavy task before him.

Addresses to Order

Mr. B. F. Bharucha, who is doing khadi propaganda in the Punjab just now, writes:

> During the last few days, there have sprung up in Amritsar three publicity committees:—Hindu, Muslim and Sikh! It is these committees, that are going to present addresses to the Governor, Sir Malcolm Hailey, on his visit to Amritsar. At a public meeting held at the Jallianwala Bagh on the 28th instant, they have been disowned. But that won't stop their propaganda. Besides the Congress Committee, the Khilafat Committee, and the Sikh League, there are three other communal bodies in Amritsar —the Hindu Sabha, the Muslim Sangathan of Dr. Kitchlew and the Shiromani Committee of the Sikhs.

The questions he asks are: who are these publicity committees and whether they have any other object for their existence save that of presenting the new Governor with addresses. How nice it would be if the Governors and other officials will recognize the inevitable and simply refuse to receive addresses. I would not even mind co-operating with them to found a society for stopping all addresses by anybody whatsoever to anybody, whether official, non-official and whether Moderate, Liberal, Swarajist or No-changer. The addresses do no good to anybody and they have now ceased to be instruments of propaganda. The public will no longer be deceived by these shows which more often than not mean nothing but cheap advertisements for those who present them. Why should not honest work be its own certificate of merit?

The Malabar Floods

The floods in the Southern Presidency are so vast in their magnitude that imagination refuses to picture them. They demonstrate man's helplessness. Fruits of years of patient toil have been swept away in a moment. Help seems almost a mockery. Whilst, therefore, I have given my opinion that effective relief is beyond the capacity of the Congress, I have not desired it to mean that Congressmen should do nothing. Personal service is always of course there. But even monetary assistance must be given whereever it is possible for individuals to render. If, therefore, readers of *Young India* would care to send me subscriptions for relief, I would

[1] Palanquin

gladly receive them and utilize them in the best manner I should know. I am certain that the damage is too vast for sporadic or isolated effort. Some agency that would command universal confidence should handle the work of relief. I repeat that Congressmen should not hesitate to help Government agency in the face of this awful calamity. Adversity makes strange bed-fellows.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani

So the great Hasrat Mohani[1] is to be released on the 12th instant. He is to be in Ahmedabad on his way to Cawnpore. A great reception is in store for him wherever he goes. I do not know what views he holds today. As everybody knows, I differ from him in many ways. His views of conduct even in jail are so hoplessly different from mine. His views on swadeshi are in my opinion even dangerous. But our differences notwithstanding, my respect for him, his patriotism, his learning, is very great. He has a tenacity of purpose which is the envy of friends and despair of foes. He has suffered for his religion and his country as very few of us have done. I hope, therefore, that he will have a rousing reception wherever he goes.

Virar, not Berar

In a recent issue of *Young India* I stated that a Swarajist friend had complained of No-changers having retained their position by forcible means. A friend from Berar wrote saying it could not be Berar. I asked the Swarajist friend and he tells me the repudiation was correct. The complaint was against Virar, not Berar. I apologize to the Berar No-changers for the misunderstanding which they will appreciate was pardonable. Virar No-changers beware! If I was an autocrat, I should immediately require these militant No-changers to resign their membership of the Congress unless they apologize publicly to the Swarajists and to the Congress. Of course, I assume that this time I am correctly reporting my informant, and that my informant himself was correctly informed.

A Remedy?

A correspondent suggests a solution of the Hindu-Muslim question in the course of a letter from which I take the following:

> The Mohammedans will respect the Hindus when the former find that the latter are equal to them in strength of body, and then and then

[1] 1875-1951; nationalist Muslim leader; took active part in the Khilafat movement and was Gandhiji's chief opponent at the Khilafat Conference of November 1920.

only will union be possible. You will, therefore, concentrate all your energies on the uplifting of the Hindu race in body. Let the Hindus set up *akharas* in every village and town for exercise and let them eat nourishing food. You should preach to them not to spend much on the marriage of their sons and daughters, but keep *brahmacharya* up to the age of say 21. You will thus be doing a great service to the Hindu race and the attainment of swaraj will follow as a matter of course. Please publish this letter in *Young India*.

The correspondent will level down both Hindus and Mussalmans to the position of brutes continually measuring brute strength for the purpose of existence. Only he forgets that between brutes there is no love lost. I want the Hindus to be physically strong. I want them to fear no man. These are necessary not merely for Hindu-Muslim unity, but even for national existence apart from unity. But I know that possession of mere physical strength will not bring about unity. We should still be fighting like 'cats and dogs' so long as we have no love in us for one another. I for one do not consider it worth while to devote my life to procuring an armed neutrality. I want lasting peace that springs from toleration of each other's religion. It is the old story; whether as between ourselves and English or between Hindus and Mussalmans, we want change of heart. Everything else will follow as a matter of course.

The correspondent prescribes *brahmacharya* for developing physical strength. It is a base use to make of a priceless possession to think of self-restraint for acquiring physical prowess. Do Tommies observe self-restraint for becoming Sandows? Let the correspondent quietly work out the implications of his prescription. I wish we had an army of 10,000 real *brahmacharis*. We should then conquer Mussalmans, Englishmen and everybody. Does not the correspondent realize that his *brahmacharis* will not fight as he suggests? It is true that they will not need to do so either.

RETURN OF REGISTERS

The following committees have already sent registers containing names of representatives who are registered to spin from month to month.

Bengal	1,066
C.P.Hindustani	1,055
Bihar	790
Gujarat	381
Bombay	237
U.P.	242
Burma	36

The other provinces except Assam, Delhi, Berar, Utkal, Punjab Sind and Kerala have notified that they will send their registers before the 10th instant. I do hope that these remaining provinces will not fail to send their registers and, what is more, their quota of yarn. I take it for granted that those who have sent the registers will also see to it that the members spin their yarn also. It is interesting to note that Bengal has the largest number of representatives. C.P. Hindustani comes next. If all these representatives send and continue to send their quota regularly, we should be able easily to put khadi on a stable basis.

Young India, 7-8-1924

287. *INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA*[1]

[AHMEDABAD,
August 7, 1924]

I have just seen the letter referred to. I never said any such thing at the Lokamanya Anniversary meeting or anywhere else. I have sent several telegrams to the afflicted presidency, but in no one of them have I even mentioned the word 'spinning' or 'khaddar'. It surprises me that any one should have believed the report. I must however adhere to the opinion I have given that the relief is beyond the capacity of any private agency, nor can such relief come out of the Congress funds. The All-India Congress Committee has very little money left now. The calamity is such that everybody, co-operators, Non-co-operators, Liberals, officials should give their very best. I am taxing myself as to how I can help. On the receipt of the very first telegram, I made an appeal in *Young India*. I approached a friend privately also and received a donation from him. I am still moving in the matter. I have already made a similar appeal to the readers of *Navajivan* but, in my opinion, no one man's efforts to collect funds can possibly be adequate to the amount of the relief required. The State alone can do it efficiently and it is for that reason that I have not hesitated to advise Congressmen to place their services at the disposal of any State agency. Private aid will come in fitly to supplement the work done by the State agency. It will not be for the first time in my life that I shall have identified

[1] At the interview, Gandhiji's attention was drawn to a letter in *The Times of India* criticizing him for the advice to spin which he was said to have given to the flood-stricken people in Malabar.

myself with such relief work. I know enough of it to understand that relief will be necessary for many months to come.

The Hindu, 8-8-1924

288. SPEECH AT GUJARAT MAHAVIDYALAYA[1]

AHMEDABAD,
August 8, 1924

MEMBERS OF THE STAFF AND STUDENT FRIENDS,

Shri Kripalani sang for you a song about a king.[2] If that king returned after two years, though he had said that he would come back after six, the fault was his, not the people's. He should have understood that the people had had no time for preparations.

You have given what you could. Before I say anything about it, however, I have to give a decision. It is not necessary to give the names of the parties. They will, of course, be well known among you. A teacher has asked in a letter whether he should spin for Gandhi's sake or the country's. This is an easy question to answer. Being students in the Vidyalaya, you probably know that every question can be looked at from two points of view—black and white or extreme and moderate, and both may be correct if we consider the question from the standpoint of the parties concerned. The man who spins for Gandhi's sake is right from his point of view. He who spins for the sake of the country is also right, because he knows that Gandhi will pass away tomorrow. His attitude may be said to be more correct because, while the first one loves a perishable being, the second loves his country, and a country is certainly not a perishable object. If we secure swaraj with the help of the sword, we shall have to depend entirely on the sword to preserve it. This is a universal law. As long, therefore, as the country exists, so long will there be need for the spinning-wheel. This view is inspired by pure love, not

[1] At a meeting held to welcome Gandhiji, on his first visit to the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya since his release, the students presented him with a purse of Rs. 1,229 and a considerable quantity of hand-spun yarn, the sale proceeds of which were also to be devoted to Malabar flood-relief. J. B. Kripalani, Principal of the Vidyalaya, presided.

[2] Welcoming Gandhiji, Kripalani had quoted in his speech a poem from Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, the theme of which was that the king could not be welcomed in as befitting a manner as one would have liked.

blind attachment. A third thing. Why should we not ply the spinning-wheel entirely for our own sakes? By our talk about self-sacrifice, renunciation, etc., we are deceiving the world. Our renunciation is not self-sacrifice; it is our pleasure, nothing else. There is in it the selfishness of satisfying our own longing. Moreover, for the sake of the country means for our sakes. If we get ready to ply the spinning-wheel for our own sakes, we would never give it up afterwards—just as we cannot give up our bodily functions like eating, drinking, and so on. However, all the three points of view are true, each for the person who holds it.

Live as you like,
Realize Hari anyhow.

In these lines, Akha Bhagat has expressed one's whole duty in life. One should ply the spinning-wheel not to deceive oneself, not to deceive the country or other people, but for one's own satisfaction. All work will shine out as long as we do not do it for show. The more we have of right knowledge, the less subject shall we be to attachment. Even so, if we do a good thing, whether out of attachment or love, it is bound to profit us. There is attachment in a son's love for his father. Some credit for my having learnt to speak the truth goes to my father. I did not know at that time that truth is the highest thing. But I certainly had attachment enough for my father to feel that I should do a certain thing to please him. Restrained by my love for my mother, I stopped eating meat and saved myself from sin. Had this not happened, I would have been today among the most wicked men in the world. I was thus forced by my attachment to rise; though, indeed, who can say that I have risen? I merely escaped falling. And this because I was ruled by my attachment to my father and mother, by keeping to my vow. Vows have been the support of my life. The point is that one may do a good thing from any one or more out of a variety of motives. The issue you have raised need not have been raised at all. It is true, of course, that the idea was that we should spin. But it would not be right that, having given me five *tolas* of yarn, you should set aside the spinning-wheel. You will only fall by doing so. The spinning-wheel must simply go on working. Whether the idea will remain permanently or disappear depends only on the spirit in which you work.

The students of the Mahavidyalaya ought to try and understand certain principles on which the institution has been founded. Everyone joining this institution as a student should know them, for without that this national college will not remain na-

tional. We should understand what we have thought to be the means of winning swaraj; if, having understood them, we do not act accordingly, we shall be deceiving the world. One may acquire much knowledge in the Vidyalaya, be very proficient in English, may be able to pronounce difficult Sanskrit words with such flourish that the learned men of Kashi hold us in respect —but all this will signify nothing. You are not here to learn these things, you are here to learn what you will not learn elsewhere. They count for more than all the rest. These things are the spinning-wheel, mixing with the *Antyajas* and bringing about unity among Hindus, Muslims and Parsis. Have you come into contact with any *Antyaja* children? Do you meet any Muslim or Parsi children? And do you tell them that there is room for them in the Mahavidyalaya? Do you urge them to join the Mahavidyalaya? If, even then, they do not join, the fault will not be yours. Fate alone will be to blame.

If any person from outside comes to test you, he will not be impressed by your answers which may show your proficiency in English, Gujarati or Sanskrit. He will have observed from a distance whether you ply the spinning-wheel and whether you have abolished untouchability. The spinning-wheel, freedom from untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity—any observer should be able to notice these things carried to perfection. If you pass the test in respect of other things, that will mean nothing. You will have wasted the years spent in the Mahavidyalaya.

I thank you for what you have been doing. If now you do not take one step forward, you and the country will be put to shame. Be such servants of the country that the people are filled with admiration for you. I for one entertain the greatest expectations of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya. Just think how much money we have spent on it. We have spent as much as 90 per cent [of the available funds]. Work out the figure of this expenditure and calculate what we have spent on each student. People will shudder over it, just as I do. You should impatiently question yourself what you have given to the country in return for the money spent on you. If the future generations are not likely to be pleased with your work, it will be good for you to leave this institution. Think over the matter and resolve in your mind that you will have adopted whole-heartedly all those items of the Non-co-operation programme which should be permanent features of swaraj. You will be worthy workers only if you understand this thing; you will then

derive incalculable benefit from what has been spent on you. Just as the seeds in the field sprout and grow into corn, so will the money spent on you yield fruit. I wish to tell you as your friend, fellow-student and Chancellor, that you have only two courses open to you. You must accept one or the other. It is one thing to give yarn for the sake of the Chancellor and another to do so to please me. If you have faith in me and do something out of love or attachment for me, there is something in it, but it will be a different matter if you do anything merely to please me. If you have faith in the spinning-wheel and yet you do not spin, and then you shake off your lethargy on my persuasion and for my sake, that will be good of you. If, however, you do a thing in which you have no faith at all, merely to please me, that would be very bad. It would be hypocrisy, it would be fraud and deception. The teacher who said that one must spin for the sake of the country must have meant this.

If you do not have faith that the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians and Jews are your brethren and if you are not ready to act accordingly, you should by all means leave the Mahavidyalaya. You should go your way and the Vidyapith will plan its own programme of work.

While speaking of this, I remembered the Mahavidyala building. Many *Antyaja* workmen work there and they experience difficulty about water. If you can do so, you yourselves should join the *Antyajas* in the work and let the other workmen leave. But I see that you do not have the necessary physical strength and love of labour to do that. In such circumstances, you should make arrangements to supply water to the *Antyajas* and to the others separately. You will tell me that you will get exhausted with physical labour and ask, moreover, how you can find time for studies. I tell you that you can manage even that with Shri Kripalani's help. You can ask the workmen belonging to the higher castes to fetch water and serve it to the *Antyajas*, tell them that, if they do not have compassion for members of lower castes, you yourselves will serve water to the latter. In doing so, you will be giving them an object-lesson in compassion and satyagraha. Do at least this, sit down for your meal only after bathing and feeding the *Antyajas*. We may live in the open or in an unfinished building, but should never forsake the *Antyajas*. By acting in this way, we shall end the oppression by the higher castes. The teachers cannot give you this education, nor will you get it from books. If the teachers succeed in giving it, it will be by setting an example to you by

their own conduct. At the time when this Vidyapith was established[1], I had said that, if this institution was meant only to impart education in the three R's, I was not qualified to be its Chancellor. The Vidyapith and other institutions were founded with the idea that they would be devoted to developing strength of character. It is my duty to remind you of this and you should accept this essential feature and live in keeping with it.

Take it that you are committing a sin if your spinning-wheels lie unprotected against sun and rain. Just as you keep the apparatus in the laboratory clean and tidy, so should your spinning-wheel also be found. I certainly expect to find with you spindles, leather-holders, cotton, slivers, etc., of the best quality. It is not right that you should look to the Ashram for that, because you are known as "Visharads"[2]. If I cannot expect this of you, of whom else can I? You should surely have enough self-respect to secure these things on your own.[3]

Eat less but donate money. Reduce the amount of milk you take so that you can save money. If you have been spending any time doing nothing, spin and pay something. Pay money yourselves and go out collecting funds and collect as much as you can on your responsibility. Let us learn to die for the country. Let us cultivate burning love for the country, for that is the meaning of national education. We can offer shelter to people on dry ground if they have to sleep in the wet, and take their places ourselves; we can serve the country in this way only if we have in us the motherly love about which we learnt in our childhood from Dalpatram[4]. There is no meaning in your giving anything from what you do not need. Give other things as well, putting yourselves to some positive inconvenience. There will be pure love in doing so, and you will not want to boast about it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 10-8-1924

[1] In 1920

[2] Literally, those who are proficient

[3] Gandhiji then appealed for funds for the relief of flood victims in Malabar.

[4] A 19th-century poet of Gujarat

289. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
August 9, 1924

Very Confidential

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I promised to write to you an important letter, but I have not been able up to now. I was ready four days ago when I received Mrs. Naidu's letter informing me she was coming here. I, therefore, stopped the letter pending her arrival. I wanted to say that I was prepared to facilitate your securing the Congress machinery, actually assisting you to do so. In no case will I be party to vote-catching in the sense it is being understood at the present moment. I would be prepared to work outside the Congress but not in opposition to it. I have no interest in anything but promoting a peaceful atmosphere, khaddar, and Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability. In all this I know I should get your assistance. I would naturally have an organization for that work, but not with any desire whatsoever to capture the Congress ultimately. I would not like to waste the nation's time in wrangling over getting a majority in an atmosphere such as is prevalent today.

If you are not prepared to take over the whole of the Congress machinery, I am quite prepared to facilitate your taking over those Provinces where you think you have no difficulty in running it.

Short of my coming into your programme, I would like to place myself at your disposal.

Then there is the question of the Congress President. Rajagopalachary, Gangadharrao and Rajendra Babu insist on my accepting the office. Vallabhbhai and Shankarlal approve of my idea of not accepting. Jamnalal is neutral and so is perhaps Mrs. Naidu. I forget to say that Shaukat Ali too is insistent that I should accept the office. The only condition that will make me reconsider my position would be your desire that I should accept. Will you please consult Messrs Das, Kelkar and others and let me know what you would advise me to do in both the matters referred to by me?

I have read this letter to Mrs. Naidu.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 5177. Courtesy: Krishnadas

290. LETTER TO BADRUL HUSSAIN

SABARMATI,
August 9, 1924

MY DEAR BADRUL,

I was pained to learn from Mrs. Naidu that you thought I had asked you to sit down in a village and work there to the exclusion of every other activity and although you could do more work. I do not remember having said any such thing at all. But I do remember having told you that, if you could not organize on a large scale without extraneous help, you should certainly go to the villages and begin there. It is wrong to produce on a large scale if there is no local market. But if you have confidence in yourself and can organize the whole of Hyderabad, nothing would please me better. Only, you must become self-supporting. Nor do I wish to prevent you from manufacturing the finest khaddar you can and from making it as 'artistic' as you can. I must have been in an idiotic state when I spoke to you, if you carried the impression that I wanted you only to manufacture the coarsest khaddar when you were capable of producing the finest. And it would be the last thing in the world for me to ask anyone to do anything that may not be to his or her taste.

Do please write if I am not clear. And share this letter with Padmaja[1] so that she may know my views.

Yours,
BAPU

BADRUL HUSSAIN, ESQ.
ABID MANZIL
HYDERABAD (DECCAN)

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Daughter of Sarojini Naidu

291. LETTER TO HANSESHWAR RAY

SABARMATI,
August 9, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. When a wife does not agree with her husband's views but is otherwise pure, the husband can win her over by affection free from animal passion. During the process, the husband must follow that which he regards as best, leaving the wife free to do as she thinks best. But she must not expect the husband to pay for her expensive tastes. The husband is bound to support her so far as food and clothing are concerned. She is entitled to divide his income, but she cannot expect him to incur debts for her. I am satisfied that where pure affection alone rules, all differences vanish or, in spite of differences, an honourable way out is found.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

HANSESHWAR RAY,
7/1 . . . . . .
CALCUTTA.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

292. LETTER TO TIRATH RAM JANEJA

SABARMATI,
August 9, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

You have my sympathy in your distress. Suicide is a sin and, as all sin means separation, the distance between you and your wife must widen with suicide. Nor will death solve the problem. For you will go to your destined place and she to hers. But whilst you are yet in the present body, you can correct yourself. Was it the body you loved or the soul within? If it was the body, you could have embalmed it and kept it chained in your room. If it was the latter, surely her soul is still with you. Is not the memory of all that was good in her enough for you? Or was

your love merely selfish? Loved ones should be nearer to us for their deaths.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

TIRATH RAM JANEJA, ESQ.
CAWNPORE

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

293. *LETTER TO ALI BROTHERS*

SABARMATI,
August 9, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHERS,

I have wires from both of you. I do not know where you are. If Bi-Amma is within reach, please give my warmest respects to her. Tell her I shall not be sorry if God takes her away. No mother can depart this world with more pride and satisfaction than she. The sorrow will be felt for those who may be left behind. We do not like to part with the oldest of our relations. Mother we want with us for all time. God has however willed otherwise. But though the body dissolves, the spirit ever abides. May it then be well with you whether she is permitted to remain with us yet a while or whether she is taken away.

Yours,
M. K. G.

MAULANAS SHAUKAT ALI
AND
MAHOMED ALI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

294. ADVICE TO LABOUR UNION[1]

AHMEDABAD,
August 9, 1924

The Labour Union can place evidence before the Inquiry Committee if it likes to do so. But I have intentionally advised the Labour Union that it is not necessary to tender evidence on its behalf. As the organizers of the Labour Union are non-co-operators, they cannot take direct part in the inquiry, but they can take some part as advisers and protectors of the workmen. The inquiry is so much restricted that the workmen will derive no benefit from it. Another, stronger, reason for the Labour Union to take no part in the inquiry is its methods of work. It has chosen to deal with mill-owners, as far as possible, with sweet reasonableness. The Labour Union cannot, therefore, take part in such an inquiry without very strong reasons. The Labour Union has to look to two things — to ensure greater safety of the buildings in the future and to get compensation for the dead and the injured. This inquiry has no direct connection with the question of compensation. For the future safety of the buildings, the Labour Union is fully alive and negotiations are going on with proper authorities.

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-8-1924

295. FLOODS IN MALABAR

I have been receiving telegrams asking for help in connection with the floods in Malabar. Who can help where thousands of houses have been destroyed, crops washed away and fertile soil turned into sandy waste! At this juncture, one way out is to rest content with whatever help the Government extends. Such aid as it wishes us to provide, we should offer, if we can. Even when all this is done, there is certainly room for private donations and voluntary service.

Relief measures in respect of this calamity cannot be completed in a day or even in a month. They will go on for a year or

[1] This was published in *Majoor Sandesh*, the organ of the Ahmedabad Labour Union, with reference to an accident in the Gujarat Ginning Mill.

more. The relief work in connection with the floods in South Kanara last year has continued till today. Meanwhile, there have been floods there once again, so they have now to start relief work afresh. But when relief measures taken for one whole year could not cope with the damage caused by a minor flood, how much more time is likely to be taken when a whole province is as good as submerged in water? Hence I certainly wish to rouse the generosity of the people of Gujarat.

The Gujaratis had very liberally helped famine-stricken Orissa.[1] They have contributed to many other funds. Appeal for help can be made only to those who have been accustomed to give help. Therefore, I appeal to every reader of *Navajivan* on behalf of the helpless people of Malabar. One may send whatever one likes and however much one likes. We can get some help through children even by teaching them the geography of Malabar, by telling them of the calamity and thereby rousing their sentiment of love.

Every reader

1. can donate a day's earning;
2. can get his neighbour to do similar sacrifice;
3. can contribute an amount equal to the price of his day's food;
4. can spin more on this account and send the yarn;
5. can curtail to some extent his requirements of cloth and donate the cloth saved;
6. can give up his addictions, if any, and donate the money thus saved.
7. One who cannot give up his addiction altogether should give up part of it and donate whatever money is thus saved.
8. One who is accustomed to comforts or luxuries can, because of this calamity, give up a few and thus spare something for help. He who does so himself can inspire his friends and relatives to do likewise.

In regard to this work there can be no distinction between co-operators and non-co-operators.

The reader should rest assured that every possible step will be taken to ensure that the money and the articles received will be duly utilized for the purpose.

None should ask how much money would be needed. 'The more the merrier' is the rule which applies here. Even when we give or do whatever we can, it will be found inadequate. What-

[1] In 1920-21

ever is offered with a good intention is worth a million. I urge all to contribute generously according to their capacity. I intend to acknowledge in *Navajivan* whatever contributions are received. I had received Rs. 250 from a gentleman when the news of the first floods in South Kanara were published, and I take this opportunity to acknowldge it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-8-1924

296. EDUCATION CONFERENCE

This conference was held and is now over. It should be regarded as an important conference from the point of view of teachers and the general public too. But these are not days when either of them would attach importance to it. The value of teachers is recognized neither by the public nor by the teachers themselves. They are valued according to their salary. A teacher is paid less than an ordinary clerk. Hence, in practice, a teacher is valued less than a clerk. Is it for this reason that we refer to a teacher as *mehtaji*[1]?

If it is so, how can we expect that the teachers' worth will ever rise? Can anyone raise the salaries of seven lakh teachers in seven lakh villages? If the salaries of so many teachers do not rise and if it is considered necessary to raise them, we should rest content with employing high-paid teachers in a few villages and allowing the rest to go without education. We have been doing this since the establishment of British rule. We realize that this practice is wrong. Hence let us find out a scheme which can cover all villages. Under this scheme, teachers will not be valued according to their salaries and work. Teachers themselves will place more value on their teaching work than on their salaries. In short, teaching should be regarded as the teachers' dharma. The teacher who takes his food without performing that sacrifice should be looked upon as a thief. If that is done, there will be no shortage of teachers and yet they will be valued a million times higher than millionaires. By changing his outlook, every teacher can enjoy that position even today.

It is up to the teachers to make a success or failure of this conference. The key to success lies in the teachers' pledge. If the teachers learn all the processes in regard to spinning as a matter of

[1] Literally, one doing a clerical job

duty and present not less than 3,000 yards [of yarn] to the Congress every month, the conference may be considered to have been largely successful. Every teacher can do at least this much. The immediate task before national teachers is to help in winning swaraj. The first and the least help which they can offer is to spin and wear khadi. He who does this will have done everything else. He who does everything else except this does nothing.

Lastly, in accordance with the dictum of the *Gita*, "Lesser ones follow the example set by great ones", the pupils will follow their teachers. Thus, the people will easily gain a lot from the work of the teachers and pupils.

The other test concerns the practice of untouchability. If the teachers have soul-force, they will surely attract the *Antyajas* to their schools. If thereby the school breaks up, what does it matter? A school should support religion; religion does not exist for the sake of the school. If we cannot teach the object-lesson of eradicating untouchability to children, what else shall we teach them? Some parents may say, "Do not teach too much truthfulness to our children, because by following the path of truth they will become unfit to engage in business." What will the teacher say then? Will he not do without those children? How will it profit anyone to study history, geography and arithmetic divorced from truth? Similarly, the teachers should request the Muslims, Parsis and members of other communities to send their children to national schools.

If the teachers would forget the question of their livelihood and think only of their duty, the schools will come to have new vitality and become truly national, and then alone will they be of use to the national movement. It is the first lesson for the young and the old, for men and women, that they should remain loyal to a pledge once they have accepted it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-8-1924

297. *MY NOTES*

Greatness of the Himalayas

It is not as if only Englishmen knew or discovered that one's health improves by staying in the Himalayas. The reader will like to read the translation[1] that a friend has sent me of the verses in praise of the Himalayas to be found in Ayurveda, in order to show that their greatness has also been recorded in our ancient books.

While reading this who would not feel that such ancient statements go to show that the lives of our ancestors must have been full of poetry? A very simple thing has been adorned with figures of speech and rendered sweet. They could do that because the people then were contented. India was, comparatively speaking, happy. Even the poorest did not starve. The land of Bharat was independent. Will not such an age come again? The *vaids*[2] proved to be true; that age will return only when we prove ourselves to be true. The *vaids* should themselves go to the Himalayas and get refreshed, acquire honesty of purpose, discover medicines and give their benefit to us so that they may earn spiritual merit. Today the *vaids* are intent on demanding a rupee for service worth a pie; they have nothing of the research spirit of the West, but imitate the West's greed for money, learn by rote old verses and dispense medicines and add to the number of diseases instead of reducing it. They tempt the disease-stricken by their various advertisments in newspapers and make us perpetual slaves to them and their medicines. If, however, they would stay in the Himalayas and make researches, and also attempt to make us self-controlled they would promote their own welfare as well as ours. We may learn from them of one medicine which can do what a hundred may not. Today the mountains are fit resorts only for the rich or the ascetics. The middle classes have to lead their lives somehow by imbibing endless medicines.

Accident in a Mill

A Government committee is investigating at the moment the causes of the accident which occurred when a mill collapsed. The terms of reference are very limited in scope. The duty of

[1] Not translated here

[2] Physicians practising Ayurvedic system of medicine

the owner of the mill is much larger than this; that of the Mill-owners' Association is larger still and that of the Mill-workers' Union is in a way the largest of all.

The Government committee may do what it likes, but it is the clear duty of the owner of the mill to support to the full the families rendered helpless. Whatever may have been the cause of the accident, the poor workers had no hand in it at all. In such circumstances, whether law enjoins it or not, the mill-owners are in duty bound to support the helpless families, to provide medical treatment to the wounded and hereafter to take greater precautions in regard to the sound condition of the building.

It is the duty of the Mill-owners' Association to maintain the good name of every mill-owner. It is bound to maintain and be answerable for the condition of the buildings of all mills. It should call some impartial building expert, get him to inspect mill buildings and obtain his certificate in respect of every building of the mills, get removed whatever defects may have been pointed out by him and should ascertain whether or not the mill-owners concerned have made proper provision for the medical treatment of injured mill-workers and for the maintenance of helpless families.

The responsibility devolving on the workers' union is both heavy and delicate. It is its especial duty to safeguard the interests of workers. There is constant apprehension that the mill-owners may regard this as a breach of the union's obligations. Nevertheless, the union ought to take such steps as are necessary to protect the life of workers. It is the natural and first step to get this ensured through the mill-owners. If no help is forthcoming from the mill-owners, adequate steps ought surely to be taken independently of them. I wish, however, to give my detailed idea about this through the *Majoor Sandesh* only; hence I do not take up space for it in *Navajivan*. But I shall merely say that the mill-owners should not put the labour union into an awkward position and they should realize that the union leaders do not wish ill to them, but wish them well. Moreover, keeping this in mind, they should assist the labour union in its work as the workers' guardian and take from it the help they require.

"Aavkar-layak ke -dayak?"

"Simlanivasi" asks me whether just as I accepted a correction concerning the word *talleen*, I would not correct the phrase *aavkardayak*. I have already introduced that correction in the article itself. *Dayak* means that which gives, *layak* means fit. In this

sense, we should consider Government's tyranny as *aavkarlayak*, not *aavkardayak*. Who knows how many such mistakes are being committed? Hence I should like to make the pleasant suggestion that every educated reader of *Navajivan* should correct such errors himself when he reads the paper.

TEACHING FACILITIES

It is reported that many men, women and children in Ahmedabad are keen to learn spinning. If facilities in the way of spinning-wheels, etc., are available many of them intend to do spinning. In order to obviate any possible inconveniences in this regard, brother Laxmidas has released the following information.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-8-1924

298. *SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED*[2]

(A correspondent to *Navajivan* sends a formidable letter wherein he objects to most of my propositions and generally my way of life. A friend has translated my reply to it for the benefit of the readers of *Young India*. Translation of the letter is not given as the reply itself enables the reader to know the objections.)[3]

Right conduct is not like Euclid's right line. It is like a beautiful tree, not one of whose millions of leaves is like any other. Though, therefore, they are from one seed and belong to the same tree, there is none of the uniformity of a geometrical figure about any part of a tree. And yet we know that the seed, the branches and the leaves are one and the same. We know, too, that no geometrical figure can bear comparison with a full-blossomed tree in point of beauty and grandeur.

Therefore, where the correspondent sees inconsistency, I see neither contradiction nor insanity in my life. It is true that, as a man cannot see his back, so can he not see his errors or insanity. But the sages have often likened a man of religion to a

[1] Not translated here

[2] The original of this article was written in Gujarati and published in *Navajivan*, 10-8-1924, under the title "Rosary or the Spinning-Wheel".

[3] This prefatory paragraph was published, along with the translation, in *Young India*, 14-8-1924.

lunatic. I, therefore, hug the belief that I may not be insane and may be truly religious. Which of the two I am in truth can only be decided after my death.

I never asked my audience to substitute the spinning-wheel for the rosary. I only suggested that they could go on spinning taking the name of 'Narayana' simultaneously. And whilst today the whole country is on fire, I think it behoves us all to fill the buckets of the spinning-wheel with the water of yarn, and extinguish the fire with the name of 'Narayana' on our lips.

I want to see the spinning-wheel everywhere, because I see pauperism everywhere. Not until and unless we have fed and clothed the skeletons of India will religion have any meaning for them. They are living the cattle-life today and we are responsible for it. The spinning-wheel is, therefore, a penance for us. Religion is service of the helpless. God manifests Himself to us in the form of the helpless and the stricken. But we, in spite of our forehead marks, take no notice of them, i.e., of God. God is and is not in the Vedas. He who reads the spirit of the Vedas sees God therein. He who clings to the letter of the Vedas is a *Vedia*—a literalist. Narasinha Mehta does indeed sing the praise of the rosary, and the praise is well-merited where it is given. But the same Narasinha has sung:

> Of what avail is the *tilaka* and the *tulsi*, of what avail is the rosary and the muttering of the Name, what avail is the grammatical interpretation of the Veda, what avail is the mastery of the letters? All these are devices to fill the belly and nothing worth without their helping to a realization of the *Para-Brahma*.

The Mussalman does count the beads of his *tasbih*, and the Christian of the rosary. But both would think themselves fallen from religion if their *tasbih* and rosary prevented them from running to the succour of one who, for instance, was lying stricken with a snake-bite. Mere knowledge of the Vedas cannot make our Brahmins spiritual preceptors. If it did, Max Muller would have become one. The Brahmin who has understood the religion of today will certainly give Vedic learning a secondary place and propagate the religion of the spinning-wheel, relieve the hunger of the millions of his starving countrymen and only then, and not until then, lose himself in Vedic studies.

I have certainly regarded spinning superior to the practice of denominational religions. But that does not mean that the latter should be given up. I only mean that a dharma which has to be observed by the followers of all religions transcends them,

and hence I say that a Brahmin is a better Brahmin, a Mussalman a better Mussalman, a *Vaishnava* a better *Vaishnava*, if he turns the wheel in the spirit of service.

I certainly did not repeat the divine word 'Rama', nor count the beads on account of a feeling that my end was near. But I was too weak then to turn the wheel. I do count the rosary whenever it helps me in concentrating on Rama. When, however, I rise to a pitch of concentration where the rosary is more a hindrance than a help, I drop it. If it was possible for me to turn the wheel in my bed, and if I felt that it would help me in concentrating my mind on God, I would certainly leave the rosary aside and turn the wheel. If I am strong enough to turn the wheel, and I have to make a choice between counting beads or turning the wheel, I would certainly decide in favour of the wheel, making it my rosary, so long as I found poverty and starvation stalking the land. I do look forward to a time when even repeating the name of Rama will become a hindrance. When I have realized that Rama transcends even speech, I shall have no need to repeat the name. The spinning-wheel, the rosary and the *Ramanam* are all the same to me. They subserve the same end, they teach me the religion of service. I cannot practise ahimsa without practising the religion of service, and I cannot find the truth without practising the religion of ahimsa. And there is no religion other than Truth. Truth is Rama, Narayana, Ishwara, Khuda, Allah, God. As Narasinha says, 'The different shapes into which gold is beaten gives rise to different names and forms; but ultimately it is all gold.'

I have nothing to withdraw from what I have said about machines in the *Indian Home Rule*[1], and a reference will show that I have included the printing press in the machines. It must be remembered that it is not Indian Home Rule depicted in that book that I am placing before India. I am placing before the nation parliamentary, i.e., democratic swaraj. I do not suggest today a destruction of all the machines, but I am making the spinning-wheel the master-machine. The *Indian Home Rule* depicts an ideal State. The fact that I cannot come up to the ideal condition of things laid down therein is to be attributed to my weakness. I believe that there is no religion greater than ahimsa, and yet I cannot escape the *himsa* which is inevitably involved in the processes of eating and drinking. The ideal of ahimsa is, however, ever before me; therefore, even in these processes, I do endeavour to restrain

[1] *Vide* Vol X.

myself. I am striving every moment to reduce even those functions to a minimum.

What I have said about hospitals is also true. And yet I suppose I shall resort to the few medicines I hold lawful, so long as I retain the least attachment for my body. I went to the hospital as a prisoner. I did not run away from it immediately on my release, because I thought it my duty to remain under the care of those who had treated me with courtesy and kindness.

I am, however, ashamed at the very fact of my illness, inasmuch as I believe that a man should never fall ill. It is humiliating for me to take any medicine, and the more so that it was at all necessary to take me to the hospital.

I have never preferred killing a dacoit to winning him over with love. But he who is not equal to that love, who cannot muster all the love that the act demands, has the right to protect his proteges and his property even by killing the dacoit.

It is a gross error to liken the Englishmen to dacoits. The dacoits loot you by sheer violence, the Englishmen do so chiefly by seducing us. There is thus a great difference of method in the two. A liquor-vendor also robs me of my soul by selling his liquor. Should I suggest killing him, or non-co-operating with him? But if an Englishman brutally assaults you, or a liquor-vendor forcibly tries to pour liquor down your throat, and if you will not win both over by love, then it is open to you to engage them in an armed combat. It would make no difference if the aggressors in the case were one or many, weak or strong.[1]

I have ventured to give a reply to the above letter, but I have a doubt whether it was proper to do so. I have assumed the correspondent's object to be pure; hence only I took the trouble to reply to him. But I think it can be seen from my reply that usually a great deal of erroneous thinking is found in such correspondence.

It seems the life of many educated people has become devoid of thought. As long as one cannot deduce a corollary from a principle, one can be held to have no knowledge of the principle at all. If the correspondent had gone deep into the subject and thought profoundly over it, he himself could have deduced all the answers that I have given. Truly speaking, all these replies are already there in my earlier writings. But I find from the letters I receive that correspondents' lazy thinking is a common

[1] The two paragraphs that follow are not found in *Young India* and have been translated from *Navajivan*.

fault and hence I have to give this reply. But I advise every reader and correspondent that they should think deeply on every subject, because by doing so they will save themselves from many misconceptions.

"Reading without reflection is fruitless."

Navajivan, 10-8-1924 and *Young India*, 14-8-1924

299. APPEAL TO DONORS

About the Malabar catastrophe, I have written in the Gujarati *Navajivan*.[1] But I know there are a good many generous-minded people among the readers of *Hindi Navajivan*. I appeal to them to give as much as they can.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 10-8-1924

300. LETTER TO A. W. BAKER

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR MR. BAKER[2],

I have received two letters from you. The first I acknowledged. I have the book too. Do write always please. But I feel that I must go my way. We are all searchers. It is well with us so long as we do not interpose the 'I' between God and ourselves.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A. W. BAKER, ESQ.
P.O. PORT SHIPSTONE
NATAL

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* "Floods in Malabar", 10-8-1924.
[2] An advocate of Natal

301. LETTER TO PAUL F. CRESSEY

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

We are taught from childhood discipline in self-denial. Though, therefore, in the East, we ever fail to live up to it, we know that life is not for indulgence but essentially for self-denial. Would that the students of America could imbibe that one lesson.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PAUL F. CRESSEY, ESQ.
GRANVILLE, OHIO
U.S.A.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

302. LETTER TO LALA BULAKIRAM

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I would not like to send any message to the Amir[1]. I would like my work to speak for itself. Nor would I care to send any present. My yarn has not been separately converted into cloth.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PS.

I have just received your second letter. I rather like their resignations. We are responding to Truth. Satyagraha is not excitement. It follows calm determination. I shall wait indefinitely.

M. K. G.

LALA BULAKIRAM
BHASKER PRESS
5 KUTCHERY ROAD
DEHRA DUN

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Of Afghanistan

303. LETTER TO R. KANE

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.

(1) I am against compulsory education. Compulsion may be unjust. It is certainly unnecessary.

(2) If we get swarajya today, I should resist any attempt to make primary or any education compulsory. We have not yet tried the voluntary system.

(3) The Yeotmal Municipality will be within the terms of the Congress resolution if it availed itself of the compulsory education measure. But, if I had any say in the matter, I would plead with the Councillors to try all voluntary effort before trying compulsion. I know the evil effects of the latter wherever it has been tried.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

R. KANE, ESQ., M.L.C.
YEOTMAL

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

304. LETTER TO MANGALSINGH

August 10, 1924

DEAR SARDAR MANGALSINGHJI,

This will introduce to you Mr. Valji Desai who has been a co-worker for a long time. He went to jail soon after me on the same charge. Please help Mr. Desai in any manner that may enable him to stay in the Punjab and study things.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 5996. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

305. LETTER TO ALI HASAN

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I did have your letter. A Hindu is one who believes in the Vedas, Upanishads, *Puranas*, &c., and *Varnashrama* dharma. I am unable to agree with you that we may reject the claim of those who say they belong to particular religions. I claim to be the best judge of what I believe. Don't you?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MR. ALI HASAN, BAR-AT-LAW
PATNA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

306. LETTER TO C. R. DAS

SABARMATI,
August 10, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

A friend of Mr. Khopkar has handed the enclosed to me. He says Mr. Khopkar thinks you could not have signed the paper. But if you have, Mr. Khopkar is prepared, he says, to prove his innocence to your satisfaction. Will you please tell me what I should say to Mr. Khopkar's friend?

I hope you and Mrs. Das are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K GANDHI

MR. C. R. DAS
CALCUTTA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

307. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Sravana Sud 10 [*August 10, 1924*][1]

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Please see the letter I have written to Motilalji. I have asked Krishnadas to send a copy of it to you. Govind Babu is working in Orissa. You may inspect his work and, if you approve of it, give him monetary assistance from the Gandhi Seva Sangh funds. His ability is very limited, though his demand is great, viz., Rs. 200/- a month. Of course, this much is not to be given. If he passes your test, you may give him Rs. 50/- a month. Examine his case carefully.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G.N. 2848

308. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Sravana Sud 10 [*August 10, 1924*][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. My weight has no doubt gone down, but in other ways my health is definitely good. Do whatever you can after reading about Malabar in *Navajivan*.

I hope you go out for walks regularly. You need not worry if any letters or words in your writing are scratched.

Today Haribhai has come here.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Make it a habit to take black French plums soaked in water. Your second postcard has come just. Most probably I shall be here. Do come soon.

BAPU

SISTER VASUMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 453. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] The date is given according to *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, a collection of Gandhiji's letters to Jamnalal Bajaj.

[2] The postmark bears this date.

309. *LETTER TO V. G. DESAI*

Sravana Sud 10 [*August 10, 1924*][1]

BHAI VALJI,

Since I had sent your article on Simla to the press for printing, it was none of my job to send it to you. But you and Swami being close friends, the latter would naturally take as much liberty as he likes. You had written the article in such a small hand and so close that it was difficult for me to read it and the Swami seems to have, therefore, returned it to you. Now write it again.

Running the journals is not the only difficulty in my going there.

I was just going to send Anandshankarbhai's letter to you, but something crossed my mind and I gave up the idea. I had accepted your correction and it is in there. But I remember I gave up the idea of sending Anandshankarbhai's letter to you as I thought that to do so would be a sort of vanity on my part. I had no time to write a humorous letter.

I have already explained the distinction between *layak* and *dayak*.

I am sending a letter for Mangalsingh. All Sikhs are simple and humble. If Mangalsingh is not there, give it to any Akali Sikh you may meet.

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6024. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

[1] From the reference to the article on Simla, published in September 1924, it is evident that the letter was written in 1924. In that year, *Sravana Sud* 10 fell on August 10.

310. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Sravana Sud 10 [*August 10, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I got all your letters. I get a lot of help from them.

It is also hard for me not to write what I believe to be true about Sarojini. The people must make up their minds what work they should take from whom. If I praise someone for one of his activities, why should anybody conclude that he is in all respects perfect. Though I say all this, I do wish that you should continue to write to me whatever thoughts come to your mind.

I know that Malaviyaji does not approve of my views in regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem. I, however, strongly believe that we have no other remedy for the purpose. True, we can create a sort of artificial unity for a while, but that won't help us to make any headway.

I cannot give you any advice in regard to Sunderlalji. Yes, I know this much in this matter that Jamnalalji did not give him the help he wanted on his own condition. Jamnalalji knows him far better than I. Whatever you may do in this matter, take Jamnalalji's advice.

I thank you for the two months' donations which you tell me you have sent to Jamnalalji. It was on the strength of these donations that I asked Jamnalaiji to make some provision for the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha and two other institutions.

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6023. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] The letter appears to have been written after the article "Bombay, Remember Sarojini", 3-7-1924. In 1924, *Sravana Sud* 10 fell on August 10. *Vide* also "Letter to G. D. Birla", after 3-7-1924.

311. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI

SABARMATI,
August 11, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have your two letters. I am sorry about Bi-Amma. I hope you will get the permission you have sought. That we should be exiles in our own country! And yet play about swaraj! The pity of it all!

The health having suffered, I got Vithalbhai to put down the Corporation address for 30th August.[1] So, ordinarily, I should like us to start touring in the beginning of September. But I have written to Mahomed Ali and have told him I could now go to Delhi if he wants me. I must try and see whether I can stand the strain. Even if he does not need me, I think we should begin work through Delhi. I observe that Moharram Day is 12th August. It is another anxious date for us. I do not know where we should find ourselves that day. Consider all these things and think out where we should be.

I know your own difficulties about the Khilafat work. As for the swaraj movement so for the Khilafat, I think we shall find we shall have to rely upon the quality of a few workers rather than the quantity of many.

I have said my say about the choice of the President. There is so much passion about that it seems almost impossible to do clean work if one has to fight for a majority. The latter must come easily if it is to be at all useful. I intensely dislike the Western method of attaining majorities.

I will try to read the Khilafat news.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI
BOMBAY

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Vithalbhai Patel", 17-5-1924.

312. LETTER TO ANANDANAND

Monday [August 11, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI ANANDANAND,

I have your letter. Keep on issuing supplements. I shall give you eight galleys regularly. I have found a way for it yesterday. We shall have to see what to do after what has been written is finished. We shall see about it when the time comes. I shall send you a wire about how many columns are ready for *Navajivan* Perhaps I may miscalculate, but I shall be careful.

I quite see that we must pay attention to the 'business' side also. It is for you to stick to it. I may say something hasty while thinking of other aspects, but ultimately I shall come round, because I am after all a satyagrahi and will ever remain that.

I do not think Valji is right in his view of the English of the History of Satyagraha. We want to improve Gujarati only. Since the English version has been taken up by Madras, we may not interfere with it. Ganesan is a straightforward man. Money is not his God. His is a big venture. Let us encourage him and promote the Gujarati work ourselves. Do let me know if there is any flaw in this.

We should be prepared to give on occasion more pages in *Young India.*

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 7753

[1] The reference to Ganesan suggests that this letter was written on the same day as the one addressed to V. G. Desai, the following item.

313. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Sravana Sud 11 [*August 11, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have not been able to follow clearly what Ganesan has to say and your question. But, in a general way, I would advise you to leave the matter to Ganesan's discretion.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

The replies to other matters have been given yesterday.

V. G. DESAI
STERLING CASTLE
SIMLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6026. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

314. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Sravana Sud 11 [*August 11, 1924*][2]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. Mr. Aiyar's letter had no effect on me, for my way of saving the Hindu religion is quite different. I do not believe that starting a journal will do any good. In the Punjab we have not given any chance to the Muslims. Mr. Das could not possibly do anything else. Having himself framed the pact, how could he break it at the crucial time? Nobody is stopping me from going to Delhi. In any case, I hope to go there in September.

Do keep writing to me about everything and send me any literature that may be worth reading.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[1] The addressee was at Simla during 1924.

[2] The reference to Gandhiji's visit to Delhi in September suggests that the letter was written in 1924. Gandhiji went to Delhi in August and again in September 1924. In that year *Sravana Sud* 11 fell on August 11.

[PS.]

I return Aiyar's letter herewith. I have received Rs. 10,000/- today. I wrote a letter to you yesterday to your Hardwar address.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6025. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

315. TELEGRAM TO SAROJINI NAIDU[1]

[On or after *August 12, 1924*]

SAROJINI NAIDU
TAJ
BOMBAY

UNNECESSARY ATTEND MEETING. IDEA IS NON-CO-OPERATORS SHOULD ASSIST GOVERNMENT AGENCY FOR RELIEF.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10107

316. TELEGRAM TO K. MADHAVAN NAIR[2]

[On or after *August 12, 1924*]

MADHAVAN NAIR
VAKIL
CALICUT

RAISING FUNDS CLOTHES. INCESSANTLY THINKING OF FOODLESS CLOTHLESS HOMELESS COUNTRYMEN.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10108

[1] This was in reply to Sarojini Naidu's telegram of August 11, received by Gandhiji on August 12, 1924, which read: "Sherif proposes inviting Governor preside. Requesting flood meeting. Wire if Non-co-operators can join."

[2] This was in reply to Madhavan Nair's telegram of August 12, 1924, which read: "Toured through flooded area. Opened relief centres with aid of Marwari relief fund in greatly distressed area. Your article may dishearten contributors. Any contribution is welcome either large or small if Congress without funds. Kindly appeal general public people. Starting one month's food relief essential. Housing grant may be left to Government. A lac of rupees will save a lac of people."

317. TELEGRAM TO BOMBAY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

[On or after *August 12, 1924*][1]

PRESIDENT
MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
BOMBAY

YOUR WIRE. WILL GLADLY REACH BOMBAY 29TH.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 8811

318. LETTER TO NAGINDAS AMULAKHRAI[2]

SABARMATI,
August 13, 1924

I have gone through your first book[3] and was impressed by the hard work you have put into it. The arrangement is on the whole quite good. I have noticed nothing in it which could be considered inconsistent with the author's object. I see no impropriety in its being translated.

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 2-11-1924

319. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

August 13, 1924

I do believe that it is a mistake, a dangerous thing, to get orders from me in every matter. My answer is bound to be only according to the way a question is put. I may make a mistake in giving my answer. Everyone should draw his own corollaries from general principles.

[From Gujarati]
Bapuni Prasadi, p. 74

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from the President, Bombay Municipal Corporation, dated August 11, 1924, received by Gandhiji on August 12, which read: "Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Hall not available on thirtieth for presentation of Corporation's address to you. Do kindly make it convenient to accept the address on Friday twentyninth afternoon."

[2] The letter was written to the addressee in connection with the series entitled '*Gandhi Shikshan*' edited and published by him in 1923.

[3] Entitled *Satyagraha*, the series ran into thirteen books.

320. LETTER TO EDITOR, "TEJ"

Sravana Sud 13 [August 13, 1924]

BHAI GUPTA,

I daily bow, times without number, to that Krishna alone who is the author of the *Gita*, who is the master of 16,000 senses, who is an *akhand brahmachari*[1], who is free from passion and who is the Lord of our hearts, and to none else.

[From Hindi]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

321. LETTER TO INDRA VIDYVACHASPATI

Sravana Sud 13 [August 13, 1924][2]

CHI. INDRA,

At the present time, on every ceremonial occasion, I offer this one prayer to God: "O God, change the hearts of Hindus and Muslims alike; cleanse them of poison; fill them with love. Let them all realize that they should spin for the sake of their poor countrymen. Cleanse the hearts of the Hindus of all impurity and remove untouchability." What else can I send? I am sure your efforts will be crowned with success.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

PROF. INDRA
"ARJUN" OFFICE
DELHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4860. Courtesy: Chandragupta Vidyalankar

[1] One whose celibacy is inviolate
[2] The postmark bears this date.

322. *PERTINENT QUESTIONS*

A correspondent asks:

> Are you in favour of the introduction of *compulsory* primary education system in India? Is it unjust or unnecessary to make this education *compulsory*? If we get swarajya, in the present condition of our country, will you make primary education *compulsory* throughout the whole of India?

I fear I must answer the main question in the negative. I am not quite sure that I would not oppose compulsory education at all times. All compulsion is hateful to me. I would no more have the nation become educated by compulsion than I would have it become sober by such questionable means. But just as I would discourage drink by refusing to open drink shops and closing existing ones, so would I discourage illiteracy by removing obstacles in the path and opening free schools and making them responsive to the people's needs. But, at the present moment, we have not even tried on any large scale the experiment of free education. We have offered the parents no inducements. We have not even sufficiently or at all advertised the value of literacy. We have not the proper schoolmasters for the training. In my opinion, therefore, it is altogether too early to think of compulsion. I am not even sure that the experiment in compulsory education has been uniformly successful wherever it has been tried. If the majority wants education, compulsion is wholly unnecessary. If it does not, compulsion would be most harmful. Only a despotic Government passes laws in the teeth of the opposition of a majority. Has the Government afforded full facilities for education to the children of the majority? We have been compulsion-ridden for the past hundred years or more. The State rules our life in its manifold details without our previous sanction. It is time to use the nation to voluntary methods even though, for the time being, there may be no response to prayers, petitions and advice addressed to the nation. It has had little response to its prayers. Nothing is more detrimental to the true growth of society than for it to be habituated to the belief that no reform can be achieved by voluntary effort. A people so trained become wholly unfit for swaraj.

It follows from what I have said above that, if we got swaraj today, I should resist compulsory education at least till every effort at voluntary primary education has been honestly made

and failed. Let the reader not forget that there is more illiteracy in India today than there was fifty years ago, not because the parents are less willing, but because the facilities they had before have disappeared under a system so foreign and unnatural for the country. The same thing is happening today in Burma.

The writer's other question is:

> Are you in favour of primary education being made *compulsory* by the municipal and local bodies, by taking advantage of the present Compulsory Primary Education Act, specially when it is possible to do so by the hearty support of members of all shades of opinion?

This question has reference to Non-co-operators. I am of opinion that it is not inconsistent with the Congress resolution to take advantage of the Act if the councillors wish to do so. But for the reasons mentioned, I should hesitate straightway to adopt compulsion. Before giving a decided opinion on merits and apart from the fundamental objection to compulsion, I should like to know (1) whether attempt has been made to make primary education free and with what result; (2) whether every parent has been canvassed and his objection noted and met wherever it was reasonable. It is slovenly and impatient to rush to compulsion without trying all available mild means. It is not reasonable to assume that the majority of parents are so foolish or heartless as to neglect the education of their children even when it is brought to their doors free of charge.

Young India, 14-8-1924

323. WANTED EXCITEMENT

I present the readers with extracts from a letter received from a lawyer who has made considerable sacrifice in the national cause. When he non-co-operated, he sold out his books. He is now despondent. He ends his letter by saying, 'I have written this letter only to relieve my surcharged mind. If it is ignored, I shall not feel disappointed.' I cannot ignore any genuine article. I have therefore adopted the middle course. I have boiled down the letter by expunging sorrowful and admonitory portions. Here then are the extracts that call for comment:

> The charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability have not appealed to the masses for the last two years. There is no sign of coming change.

The No-changers should form their programme in conformity with human nature. They should take into consideration that there must be excitement to call forth mass enthusiasm. Satyagraha is the best form of excitement. But it should be a direct and open fight with the Government. Intercommunal satyagraha is harmful. It only gives advantage to the Government to fight in the darkness and behind the trenches at safe distance. It leaves plenty of way for intrigues and mischievous propaganda. To enter into open fight with the Government strong issues should be selected on which wider public sympathy can be enlisted. Any of the following issues will fulfil these conditions, one of which may be selected.

1. Boycott of courts and establishment of arbitration in villages, towns and cities with offices for registration of documents.

2. Boycott of currency by replacing it with hundis.

3. Suppression of drinks and intoxicating drugs.

I do not believe that we have worked enough among the masses to entitle us to know that the three things do not appeal to them. What experience we have of the masses, i.e., the villages, goes to show that the charkha has appealed to them. They simply need organizing. But we who claim to be their leaders refuse to go to the villages and live in their midst and deliver the life-sustaining message of the charkha. The writer simply does not know the masses. Or he should know that the Hindu-Mussalman masses do not quarrel. Delhi is not a village. And there, too, it would be a libel to say that the poor people quarrelled. We incited them to the fratricidal fight. The untouchability is undoubtedly a difficult point among the masses. It does, however, appeal to them, only it appeals in a way we do not like. They hug the exclusiveness which they have inherited for ages. But if we cannot, by our purity, unselfishness and patience, cure them of the disease, we must perish as a nation. The sooner every political reformer realizes the fact the better it is for him and the country. We must refuse to give up the struggle or postpone it till after swaraj. Postponement of it means postponement of swaraj. It is like wanting to live without lungs. Those who believe that Hindu-Muslim tension and untouchability can be removed after swaraj are living in the dreamland. They are too fatigued to grasp the significance of their proposition. The three things must be an integral part of any programme of swaraj. But though the task is difficult, it is not impossible. I claim therefore that this threefold programme of construction is in strict conformity with human nature as it exists in India. It is in keeping with the daily requirements of a people that is bent on making progress.

But the friend says, there must be 'excitement'. I do not know what the word means. For workers there is enough excitement in the three things. Go to any village, put up a wheel and call the villagers to embrace their untouchable brethren. The children will dance round the forgotten wheel and the villagers will be inclined to pelt you out of their midst for asking them to embrace the untouchables unless you ask them in a reasonable and sweet way. This is 'excitement' that giveth life. But there is another variety of it which 'kills'. It is momentary excitement that blinds people and makes them create a splash for a moment. That kind of excitement cannot bring swaraj. I can conceive its use for a fighting people prepared to wrest power from other hands. The problem in India is not quite so simple. We are not prepared and we are not fighters with arms. The Englishmen do not rule merely by force. They have seductive ways also. They can carefully conceal their fist in soft-looking gloves. The moment we show intelligent organization, honest but unbendable purpose and perfect and disciplined cohesion, they will hand over the whole administration to us without a blow and serve India on our terms, as we today unwittingly or unwillingly slave for them on their terms.

Satyagraha is not excitement of the second variety. It dies in such atmosphere. It needs the development of calm courage that knows no defeat and despises revenge. Even intercommunal satyagraha (if it is satyagraha) strengthens the nation for fighting the Government. The unseemly fight between No-changers and Pro-changers is not satyagraha in any sense of the term. The disgraceful events of Delhi are clearly not satyagraha. The only instances of intercommunal satyagraha are the Vaikom and Tarkeshwar. I know something of Vaikom because I am supposed to be directing it. It must succeed if the satyagrahis are patient, absolutely truthful, absolutely non-violent, yes, in thought, word and deed, and if they are gentle towards their opponents and remain fixed to their minimum. If they fulfil the conditions, the orthodox Hindus will bless them and they will strengthen and not weaken the national cause. Of Tarkeshwar I know next to nothing. But the result can only be good if it is true satyagraha.

The correspondent's method of bringing about a state of 'excitement' is in keeping with his misunderstanding of satyagraha. He does not realize that arbitration courts and registration of documents, if they have the element of compulsion in them, must defeat the very end the writer has in view. And if they are devoid of compulsion, they will offer less excitement than the wheel if only because no one will care to register documents in

private courts. Boycott of currency without the stick behind will be still less exciting. I would give much to be able to revive liquor shops picketing if a calm atmosphere can be established and 'peaceful' picketing can be found. Experience shows that our picketing in 1921 was not all peaceful.

True solution is to be found from within. It is not the masses but we that have lost faith. For the correspondent, who is in charge of a Congress committee, says that resignations are pouring in upon him. Why? Because those who are resigning have no faith in the programme. Whereas hitherto they were playing, now they are taking themselves and the nation seriously. They are responding to truth. I regard these resignations a distinct gain to the cause. If all play the game and either carry out the resolutions or resign, we should know where we are. To the secretary in charge I would suggest that he should invite the electors, if there are any at all on his register, to elect their representatives. If the members were practically self-appointed, as I fear is the case in many places, the secretary may safely remain the sole true representative of the Congress, if he has faith in himself and the programme. He is then free to devote his whole time and attention to spinning. I promise that he will not find himself the only one so devoted to spinning. There is no cause for despondency for a man who has faith and resolution.

Young India, 14-8-1924

324. THE MORAL OF IT

I have seen the letter addressed to the A.I.K.B. by the Punjab local secretary in which he speaks in glowing terms of Mr. Bharucha's efforts during his all-too-brief stay there. He has been able to infuse vigour into the khadi movement and to assist in disposing of the surplus khadi by hawking. Over six thousand rupees worth was sold in Amritsar and Lahore. The secretary says that this is the slack season in the Punjab. Could Mr. Bharucha go again in September, when all who have gone out will have returned, there will be much more work done. I congratulate Mr. Bharucha on his success and hope that he will be able to revisit the Punjab. The moral, however, of the visit is that every province, if it wills, can dispose of its own khadi. The people are willing if the workers are ready.

Young India, 14-8-1924

325. NOTES

MR. KELKAR'S CONTEMPT

I do not think Mr. Kelkar or the *Kesari* will lose by the punishment awarded by the learned judges of the Bombay High Court. Both will survive the fine. Mr. Kelkar has earned the congratulations of journalists and public men on the brave stand he took up. The judgment has only enhanced the status of the *Kesari*, great as it already is. But why this extreme sensitiveness on the part of the judges? They will surely not lose by fearless public criticism. It may not be always justified or defensible. I have not seen the articles which constituted the contempt. But what is the public gain from the punishment? Will Mr. Kelkar or the public think more kindly of the judges? If the articles merely impute bias to the judges, they have but echoed public opinion. The bias need not be conscious. But popular belief is that it is there in cases between Europeans and Indians. My own experience, wide in South Africa and comparatively limited here, confirms the popular belief. The analysis which I published in these columns of the judgments in 1919 of the special tribunals in the Punjab undoubtedly established the charge of bias against the judges of these tribunals in the Punjab.[1] Justice as between Europeans and Indians is a rare commodity. I would like to think otherwise. But it has not been possible. I am prepared to admit that, under similar circumstances, anybody else would have done likewise. That is another way of saying that human nature is the same in all climes. And judges are but human beings having the same frailties and are guided by the same feelings as the average man. I would, therefore, respectfully point out to the judges that, if they resent public criticism in the manner they appear to have done in the *Kesari* case, they shut themselves against healthy influence. Surely it must serve as a tonic for judges when a journalist of Mr. Kelkar's status and experience finds it necessary to criticize a judgment. European judges, if they will struggle against natural bias and one-sided influences that operate upon them, should, in my humble opinion, encourage and welcome the criticism of Indian journalists. The pity of it is that they rarely, if at all, read such criticism except when it comes up before them for punishment. The judgment

[1] *Vide* Vol. XVII, 216-20.

against Mr. Kelkar may make editors conceal their opinion or gild it. It will then seek a subterranean passage. We have already more than our ordinary share of it. I cannot help saying that the punishment awarded against Mr. Kelkar is calculated to increase the falsity of the life that surrounds us and still further to embitter the relations between Europeans and Indians. It was so unnecessary.

'King Can Do No Wrong'

Mr. Kelkar, if he criticizes a judge, must pay Rs. 5,000, the *Chronicle* must pay Rs. 15,000 for criticizing a Collector. But Lord Lytton, because he is the King's representative in Bengal, may libel the womanhood of India with impunity and may probably receive applause from his admirers for his 'frank' talk. His Excellency is reported to have said in a serious speech that 'mere hatred of authority can drive Indian men to induce Indian women to invent offences against their own honour merely to bring discredit upon Indian policemen.' If it was not in a report of his speech, but if it was merely a reporter's summary, I would have refused to believe that a responsible Englishman could be capable of such a 'blazing indiscretion'. Lord Lytton evidently does not know or does not care to know how deeply Indian sentiment can be stirred by such charges against Indian women. Has Lord Lytton incontestable proof for the assertion he has made? If it is merely the testimony of the police he has relied upon, he has relied upon a broken reed. His advisers should have warned him against putting faith in any such interested testimony. But why has he been able to utter such calumny with impunity? If public opinion in Bengal, and for that matter in India, was effective, he would not have dared to utter such a charge even if it could be established in an isolated case? But there is no public opinion in the country that can assert itself today. Let not even the mightiest in the land, however, consider that they can flout Indian sentiment for ever. Hindu-Muslim feud and the differences between Pro-changers and No-changers are temporary aberrations in the national movement. But the insults of Englishmen in high places sink deep in the hearts of all Indians. It is so humiliating to contemplate a closing up of all ranks among us on the strength of indiscreet acts of irresponsible representatives of the King.

A Business-like Report

The Tamil Nadu Khadi Board has sent to the A.I.K.B. an excellent resume of its work. If I had space at my command, I should give the whole report. As it is, I must be content with giving

a summary. It deals with production and sales in the centres under its control. The secretary expects soon to be able to manufacture Rs. 50,000 worth of khadi per month. The Tirpur depot now produces between 15 to 20 thousand rupees worth per month. Local sales keep pace with the production. And thus sales and production react upon each other. They are steadily improving the quality of khadi and are now trying to introduce coloured khadi saris. For production they begin, as is only proper, with storing cotton. They have purchased Rs. 50,000 worth of cotton which is all insured. Training depots too have been established where young workers are trained to gin, card and spin. The disbursements appear to me to be modest and they have full check over their departments. At their model training school at Kovur, they have over a dozen youths at present under training. These are under severe discipline. They rise early in the morning at 4-30 and attend to all the labour themselves. They become used to all the variety of carding-bows and wheels. An interesting table is attached to the report giving the quantity of cotton ginned, carded and spun by every scholar under training. The special feature of their propaganda consists in organizing *bhajan* parties resulting in much interest being taken in their work. At Kovur about 50 homes possess cloths of yarn of their own spinning. Let the reader imagine what concentration, method, business habits, honesty, organizing ability and co-operation must be required for such work. Let him next imagine one such district fully organized for khadi and self-contained. It is then easy for him to know that for that district at least there is swaraj. Let him be certain that, steady as the progress is, the district will not be fully equipped for khadi unless the curse of untouchability is removed from it. For voluntary production and distribution, there must be voluntary co-operation. That can only come when the least of the inhabitants feels a pride in being a free citizen of that little commonwealth.

Prompt Action

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has sent the following to the U.P. Government regarding the proscription of Prof. Ramdas Gaur's Hindi readers:

> The attention of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee has been drawn to the notice issued by the U.P. Government declaring, under Section 99 A of Act V of 1898, all copies of Prof. Ram Das Gaur's Hindi readers Nos. III, IV, V and VI as well as extracts therefrom, 'forfeited to His Majesty'. These readers have been in use for

some years past in a large number of schools. Their principal contents are extracts from classical Hindi writers and it is difficult to understand what passages or extracts in the books are supposed to offend against section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. I shall be obliged if you will kindly point out the particular passages which in the opinion of Government are objectionable and have led to the proscription of the books. My committee will carefully consider these passages and, if they are satisfied of their impropriety, will certainly advise Prof. Gaur to remove them from his books. I shall be glad if you will kindly send me an early answer as the books are being used in many schools connected with my committee.

The Pandit has sent a similar letter to the U.P. Minister of Education. The public will watch the developments with curiosity. Meanwhile, the publishers are said to have filed legal proceedings for setting aside the order. The books have been sold in thousands. The Government will, therefore, be hard put to it to confiscate all the books unless the boys and girls voluntarily destroy them. As yet there is no movement in that direction. On the contrary, the books are still in use as before. But, of course, the Government may have many cards up its sleeve and may be able in its own time to confound those who are harbouring these tainted books. The public will be glad to learn that the learned author has kept no copyright in the books.

A Welcome Correction

The convenor of U.P. Khadi Board wires to say 'figures published last week for U.P. do not show total number registered to spin. Registers are being sent in as we receive lists from subordinate committees.' I welcome the correction and look forward to a list that will eclipse Bengal. For next to Bengal, U.P. is the most thickly populated of our provinces.

Orthodox Protest

The President of Savarna Mahajan Sabha at Vaikom sends me a letter enclosing resolutions protesting against my countenancing satyagraha at Vaikom and urging me to stop it. The writer tells me that I have been misled by my informants. I have endeavoured to study both the sides impartially and I have come to the conclusion that the satyagrahis have, on the whole, been scrupulously correct in their conduct and that they have been sustaining the struggle under trying circumstances. I am sorry to say that I am, therefore, unable to satisfy the orthodox friends and advise withdrawal of satyagraha.

A God-send

Even the floods, though they have been merciless to Malabar in general, seem to have favoured the suppressed countrymen. For I read the following in a letter to Mr. Rajagopalachari from the Satyagraha Camp at Vaikom:

> The question of temple-entry and social equality has been solved in more than a dozen places by the floods by the collecting of all people of all castes and creeds in the temples and houses which are otherwise forbidden. Even interdining between Nambudri and Pulaya has been effected by the fury of the gods. The floods in the State have completely isolated Vaikom.

Common misery is the most adhesive cement yet known to the world. It is so cruel that it is no respecter of persons. It puts the prince and the peasant in the same watery grave.

Quiet Work

Again, how is it possible to advise stoppage of a movement which shows so much grit as is described in the following from the same letter?

> In spite of the bad weather conditions, no effort is spared in the charkha work in the Ashram. Almost all the volunteers know to spin well and the charkhas are being sent to the barricades except during heavy showers. Half the number have learnt to card and I am making it compulsory that the spinners must use their own carded cotton. Tape-making is also going on. Ere long we will set up a loom.

I must respectfully refuse to believe that cultured young men doing such honest work in the faith that it purifies them and helps them in their struggle against passion and prejudice can possibly deceive the public or me. They have no interest in so doing. For their faith is in their work.

It Melts Stones

But the president of the meeting in his letter says, "You seem to think that satyagraha, when offered to a brother will gradually melt away the opposition of the latter and win him over to the side of the satyagrahi. This is not our experience here." I do not wonder that the hearts of the orthodox have not yet been touched by the sufferings of the satyagrahis. They have not suffered long enough yet nor intensely enough. Even suffering cannot be manufactured. They must take whatever God may have in store for them. If He wants them to have to linger away in suffering, they must submit to it cheerfully. They dare not shirk the severest

trial nor may they dare stage-play suffering. That was one of my reasons against the Sikh friends resisting arrests and inviting fire. My uniform experience is that true suffering melts the stoniest hearts. With my own eldest brother, it took fully thirteen years. I do not reproduce all the letters I received from English friends. But some of them are humble recognitions of the evil done (true enough in ignorance) by the English rulers. What are these recognitions if they are not in conscious response to suffering? Nothing can shake me from the conviction that, given a good cause, suffering for its sake advances it as nothing else has ever done. To the orthodox Hindus I need not point out the sovereign efficacy of *tapasya*. And satyagraha is nothing but *tapasya* for Truth.

A Disturbing Item

There is however in the president's letter a disturbing item. I must give it in his own words as follows:

> I bring to your notice an incident that took place at Chenganur under the auspices of the adherents of the Congress party on 6th July, 1924. This was a *savarna* meeting announced to be held at the place. A representative of our committee was also invited to attend. By the machinations of a mischievous clique, the meeting was subjected to a set of resolutions which were quite contrary to the propositions adopted for presentation at the meeting. Our representative and several other *savarna* members immediately left the hall and called up another meeting composed of very respectable caste Hindus at the residence of the Vanjipozhey chief, the premier landlord of Chenganur. Leave this alone, however gruesome and treacherous the tactics be. What we painfully deplore is that an organized attempt was made to vilify and hoot him and to lay hands on him if possible. He had to come away from the place without giving scent of his departure. This incident I refer to you just to bring to your notice the manner in which Congress propagandism is pursued in Travancore now.

I ask conductors of the campaign to send me an explanation which I shall gladly print. They will not, I trust, hesitate to admit the error if any has been committed.

Reporters Beware!

The A.P. reporter in Ahmedabad lost me (temporarily I hope) all the reputation for humanity that I had built up through painful toil. For he reported me as saying that the only message I could send to afflicted Malabar was that those who were rendered naked and hungry and homeless should spin. If Mr. Painter may receive Rs. 15,000 for damage to his reputation, I think I should receive at least Rs. 1,50,000 for damage done to mine. And if I could

receive that sum, I should retrieve somewhat my lost reputation and make over the sum without deduction to the Malabar sufferers. But unlike Mr. Painter, I acquit both the reporter and the agency from all blame. The local reporter tells me he was not present at the meeting. The people who attended the meeting heard little, but the listeners thought I had said something about spinning. What would be more natural for me than that I should ask the Malabar sufferers to spin for food, clothing and lodging? Was not the great Acharya Ray doing the same thing? The poor reporter forgot that Dr. Ray was doing it after the people had settled down. However, the awful slip is a lesson for the reporters and the public. The reporters hold the reputation of public men in the hollow of their hands. It is not a light thing to misreport public men's speeches and acts. The public have to be equally careful about believing every report as gospel truth. So far as I am concerned, I must continue to warn the public and all concerned against believing what may be reported of me unless it is certified by me as correct. I am in no hurry to have every word of mine reported. The reporters would, therefore, do me a favour, if they would not report me at all when they cannot get their notes confirmed by me.

I am obliged to say all this because I have many painful memories of misreporting. In 1896 I published in India a pamphlet covering 30 pages or more on British Indians in South Africa.[1] A five-line summary was cabled by Reuter to Natal.[2] It was wholly contrary to the gist of my pamphlet. This very incorrect report inflamed the Natal colonists. I was nearly lynched to death by an infuriated crowd on my return to Natal. Lawyer friends pressed me to bring a suit for damages. But I was a non-resister even then. I refused to sue.[3] I lost nothing by not suing. When the colonist perceived that I was not a 'bad sort', and that they had cruelly misjudged me, they regretted the error. I, theerfore, in the end lost nothing by self-restraint. But I have no desire to court another such experience even though it may bring me added glory. I want to put in more work, if God so wills it. I must, therefore, ask the reporters to spare me yet a while.

Help to Malabar

I have not written the foregoing lines merely to put reporters and the public on their guard. Under the best of circumstances such

[1] *Vide* Vol. II, pp. 1-52.
[2] For Reuter's cable, *vide* Vol. II, pp. 187-8.
[3] ibid., pp. 165-6, and *An Autobiography*, Pt. III, Ch. III.

mistakes will occur. I am satisfied that there was no wilful neglect either in Ahmedabad or at the headquarters. But I wish to utilize the occasion for getting more money for the sufferers. I invite all those who were indignant over my supposed callousness to send me as much as they can towards helping the sufferers. I have invited the readers of *Navajivan* not merely to give me out of their savings, but even out of their necessaries, to share their clothes and food with the sufferers. The response has been quick and generous. The students of the Mahavidyalaya have, after the style of Shraddhanandji's pupils of the Gurukul during the South African campaign, been doing manual work at labourers' wages on the very premises that are being built for them. The possibilities of such effort are immense.

Boys and girls even under 12 have given up milk for a number of days, the savings to be devoted to the relief fund. This means in some cases 3 annas per day. Adults are denying themselves one meal per day.

Boys and girls are giving up their clothes, retaining for themselves the veriest minimum. A girl has given up her silver anklets. A boy has given up his valued gold ear-rings. A sister has sent in her four heavy gold bangles, another her heavy gold necklace. These are not exhaustive but typical instances. A little girl brought out all the coppers she had stolen. The National College students and others have given me heaps of yarn they have already spun. Others propose to spin for a certain period daily on behalf of the sufferers.

These to me are more precious than the donations in the next column, generous as they are in several cases.

May these offerings, but especially the little offerings and self-denials of the little ones, give comfort to the homeless, hungry and naked men, women and children of the afflicted areas. I invite the readers of *Young India* who have not paid elsewhere to the fund to send their quota. Telegrams before me tell me that clothing will be just as welcome as money. The poorest must identify themselves with their countrymen in Malabar by some act of self-denial.

Clothing

With reference to clothing being received in abundance, I wish to inform readers that no distinction is being made as to hand-spun or other clothing. Those who have still got mill or foreign clothes may send these. Inquiry has been made in Bombay as to where clothing should be delivered. I suggest arrangements being made with the Provincial Congress Committee. Pending such

arrangements, delivery may be made at the *Navajivan* depot in the Princess Street, Bombay. Donors will however please note the following instructions :

1. Dirty clothes should be washed and folded.
2. Torn clothes should be mended and folded.
3. All clothing should be well packed and tied in parcels with list of clothing and name of donor attached.

These will not be acknowledged separately in these columns. But donors will do well not to deliver anything without a receipt being obtained at the office of delivery. I would warn donors from paying or giving any article to anyone without taking a full receipt and knowing the collectors.

Whilst it flatters my pride to receive monies and jewellery and clothing at the *Navajivan* and *Young India* offices, I would ask the readers not to worry where they make their donations. They may pay wherever they like. It is enough so long as they pay. In a calamity of such magnitude as that through which the South is passing, there should be no distinction between co-operators and non-co-operators. As for the funds being sent to me, I am conferring with Mr. Vallabhbhai as to the best method of distribution. I am in correspondence with Mr. Rajagopalachari regarding the disposal, but if those who have been sending me wires will kindly send their suggestions I shall be grateful for them.

Young India, 14-8-1924

326. TELEGRAM TO MAHOMED ALI

[SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924][1]

PROPOSE MEET SHAUKATALI TONIGHT AND START TOMORROW MORNING METRE GAUGE. MACHINERY NOT YET DISPATCHED. ASKING SWAMI SEND LIST. HOPE BIAMMA ALL RIGHT.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10115

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from Mahomed Ali received on August 15, 1924, which read: "Please start immediately if possible catching fifteen morning mail. Failing that broad gauge mail *via* Baroda. Reconciliation probably if you come. Wire departure."

327. *TELEGRAM TO G. F. ANDREWS*[1]

[*August 15, 1924*][2]

CHARLIE ANDREWS
DWARKANATH TAGORE LANE
CALCUTTA

WELCOME. HOPE YOU ARE STRONG. LOVE FROM ALL. GOING DELHI TOMORROW.

MOHAN

From a photostat: S.N. 10116

328. *TELEGRAM TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN*[3]

[AHMEDABAD,
August 15, 1924]

LEAVING FOR DELHI TOMORROW MORNING HEALTH TOLERABLE HOPE YOU AND DAUGHTER WELL ARE YOU COMING DELHI.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10114

[1] This was in reply to a telegram from C. F. Andrews dated August 14, 1924, which read: "Arrived safely. My dearest love. Sending articles."

[2] Gandhiji left for Delhi on August 16, 1924. This telegram was sent a day before.

[3] This was in reply to a telegram from Hakim Ajmal Khan dated August 14, 1924, and received on the 15th, which read: "Wire health and when do you go Delhi."

329. LETTER TO DR. SAIFUDDIN KITCHLEW

SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924

DEAR DR. KITCHLEW,

An unknown correspondent has sent me a cutting from *Arjun*. I had it translated in Urdu. Will you please go through it and let me know what truth, if any, there is in it?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

330. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I thank you for your letter.

I am sharing with you my whole soul.

The more I think of it the more my soul rises against a battle for power at Belgaum. But I do not want to be mixed up with the Councils programme. This can only happen by Swarajists' manning the Congress or their not acting upon the Congress. I am quite willing to follow whichever course commend itself to you and our friends. With me in the Congress, the Councils, etc., should remain out of it. Then I can assist you. Or with them in the Congress, I must be practically out of it. I would then gladly occupy the place I did from 1915 to 1918. My purpose is not to weaken the power of the Swarajists, certainly not to embarrass them. Show me the way and I shall try my best to suit you. If there is anything not quite clear in this, please ask.

I am off to Delhi tomorrow in reply to Mahomed Ali's wire.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai; also S.N. 10117

331. LETTER TO RAJA OF KANIKA

SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924

DEAR RAJA SAHEB,

I must apologize for not having acknowledged your two letters earlier. I wanted to study the papers on my file before replying. I am so pressed for time[1] that I have not yet been able to study them. I hope to do so soon and write to you further.

Thanking you for promise of prompt attention,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

RAJA OF KANIKA
ORISSA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

332. LETTER TO SONJA SCHLESIN

SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924

MY DEAR MISS SCHLESIN,

Though late in the day, your letter was most welcome. If you wanted to make it a model of neatness, you have failed badly. The same slovenliness, the same smudging. I can almost see your inky fingers in your letter. Here is the certificate[2] you want. You will be entitled to accuse me of untruthfulness in that I have not certified to your slovenliness. Let me hope the new 'master' will fare better. I must refuse to plead guilty to all the charges you have noted against me. Why should I care about giving you a 'business certificate'? But how are the mighty fallen! Regarding the £24, I thought the draft of £150 included the amount. However, I am writing to Parsee Rustomji to write off the whole of the balance, whatever it might be, of the £150.

[1] The source has: "I am so pressed for work".
[2] *Vide* the enclosure.

My health is fair. Now that you have commenced to write, will you continue?

The rest I must leave to[1] Ramdas to deal with.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

ENCLOSURE

SATYAGRAHASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
August 15, 1924[2]

Miss Sonja Schlesin served me as confidential secretary in South Africa for nearly seven years and during a most important part of my public life. She was entrusted with heavy responsibilities including account-keeping, involving transactions extending to four figures at a time. She came in touch with hundreds of people belonging to different races and nationalities. During my last incarceration in South Africa, she was in sole charge of my affairs. I never once had reason to doubt her integrity or ability. Indeed, she did not work for the sake of pay but for the sake of the work itself which she loved. Her services were available to me at all times of the day. Her knowledge of shorthand and literary talents were of great assistance to me. I could not wish for a better secretary. I should like to hear that she was entrusted with a post requiring close attention, strictest honesty and ability.

The letter is from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary and the enclosure from a photostat: S.N. 10118

333. LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN

SABARMATI,
August, 15, 1924

DEAR MR. NATRAJAN,

Before I went to jail I wrote to Mr. Petit asking if Pandit Benarasidas could be paid out of the I. C. A.[3] funds in connection with his work regarding Indians overseas. I was given to understand in the jail that Mr. Petit was prepared to recommend half the amount asked. Mr. Petit however has no recollection of this. Pandit Benarasidas gives to the Gujarat National College during College

[1] The souree has "deal with".
[2] The source has "1914", a slip of the pen.
[3] Imperial Citizenship Association

months about two hours per day for teaching Hindi. The rest of his time including the long vacations of four months he devotes wholly to the work for Indians overseas. He has made this cause his own and has become an expert in these matters. Mr. Petit admits the value of the Pandit's services, but says he should be in Bombay. Pandit Benarasidas is a quiet man of a retiring disposition. He is essentially a student. I have placed at his disposal rooms at the Ashram where he is staying. I do not think that his work will be more valuable for his stay in Bombay. Of course, he can go to Bombay whenever his presence is required. The Pandit is at present being paid Rs. 130 per month, on my recommendation, by the Gujarat Vidyapith. His co-worker, Totaramji of Fiji, who is also living at the Ashram is being paid Rs. 50 out of Ashram funds. Rs. 50 are paid for the expenses on postage, wires, etc., incurred by the Pandit. But I feel that it is not right to saddle the College or the Ashram with the expenses when the largest part of his time is given to the overseas work. I therefore feel that the Association should pay at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the past expenses, and in future $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Rs. 230 disbursed monthly by the College and Ashram. Will you please let me know if my proposal appeals to you?[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the typewritten office copy : S.N. 9989

[1] Acknowledging this letter, Natarajan replied, *inter alia* : " . . . I think it may be possible to meet your wishes as regards the payment of a proportion of the expenses incurred by you out of the Ashram Funds for the work on behalf of Pandit Benarasidas and Totaramji. . . I do not think that there will be any objection to Panditji and Totaramji submitting a monthly account either in the form of a diary or otherwise, as you may suggest . . . "

334. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

Sravana Vad 1 [August 15, 1924][1]

CHI. JAMNADAS[2],

Take Revashankerbhai's advice. I see no harm in utilizing Doctor Saheb's money[3] for the building.

I am leaving for Delhi tomorrow. The agitation will subside by itself.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. JAMNADAS K. GANDHI
OPP. MIDDLE SCHOOL
NAVA PARA, RAJKOT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6027. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Gandhiji left for Delhi on August 16, 1924. The letter was written a day earlier. In 1924, *Sravana Vad* 1 fell on August 15.

[2] Jamnadas Khushalchand Gandhi; Gandhiji's nephew; joined Phœnix in 1911; principal, National School, Rajkot, from 1929 to 1937

[3] Money donated by Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM BHAGWAN DAS

To the Editor, *Young India*

SIR,

In *Young India* for 17-4-1924, in the course of your article headed "Schoolmasters and Lawyers", the following sentences occur at p. 130:

"But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse." And again: "If under swaraj we shall have to make the town life correspond to the village life, we shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life."

I most earnestly invite your attention and the attention of all readers of *Young India* to the implication of these two *ifs*, and to their vitally important bearing on the whole N.C.O. movement and the struggles for swaraj, along various lines, by various methods of the various parties which accept the new creed of the Congress wherein 'swaraj' is used without any definition or specification of any kind.

Some of us are convinced that it is just these unsolved and unsettled *ifs* which are the root cause of all the many defects which are hampering and marring the N.C.O. movement. So long as these *ifs* remain unsettled, there will *never* be mutual trust between any two classes, any two creeds, any two castes, it might almost be said, any two workers, out of all those who all want swaraj and who all disagree as to what it should be.

Because the unity secured by a mere word, an ununderstood, ill-understood, mis-understood word, is a very false unity, therefore is it breaking down perpetually—into violence of thought and language in political controversies and of deed also in Hindu-Muslim riots; therefore is the movement failing in so many respects—in respect of even-minded perseverance, of discipline, of organization, of systematic work, whether destructive or constructive.

Shortly after the first sentence quoted above, you say, "Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live, now we might have to die so that they may live." But "we" (i.e., townsfolk) are also included in "the people" for whom swaraj is to be established; are "we" not? and a large proportion of the townsfolk are as ill-off as the country-folk, are they not?

Because townsmen have been vaguely feeling that the swaraj of the N.C.O. movement, unknown as it is, is yet likely to destroy towns (witness the cries of

"Bolshevism" raised against it), therefore, they are naturally not enthusiastic about it in their hearts. For, the larger bulk of Tilak Swaraj Fund has come from towns; Bombay first and foremost. It has come from the people whose trade and means of livelihood the constructive and destructive programme of the N.C.O. movement tends to undermine, directly or indirectly. That it has so come is due partly to the affectionate respect in which your personality is held by Indians of all classes, and partly to the hope that, after all, the wished-for swaraj will not run utterly amuck against the towns, but will only try to mend the evils in them.

The disappearance of towns will mean the disappearance of Lakshmi and of Saraswati. And Gauri Annapurna, disporting by herself in the corn-fields, however 'full of grain', will fail to make human life richly artistic, scientifically intelligent, and therefore interesting. What is needed is a *balancing* of the three great goddesses, universally worshipped by human beings of all creeds, all times, all climes; and not a sacrificing of any one of them. Ayodhya flourished in *Ramarajya*, though Lanka was partly destroyed.

You, fortunately for our peace of mind, yourself say in a later para, "We shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life." This is likely to relieve somewhat the terrors caused by the earlier sentences, though it may not bring complete reassurance.

"Moderation", "the golden mean", "the middle course", "temperance"—this is what the bulk of humanity instinctively craves for and strives after. Unless you, as the leader of our leaders, place before India, some outline scheme of swaraj which will bring to all sections of the people the hope that none of them will be destroyed entirely, though the excesses of all or any will be duly curtailed—unless and until this is done, no section of the people will be able to give its whole heart to the struggle, and true unity in the striving for swaraj will never be achieved and therefore swaraj, true swaraj, will never never be achieved.

The space in *Young India* is limited and precious, and I must not ask for too much of it—though I sincerely believe that no topic that has ever yet been written about in its columns is of deeper importance or farther-reaching consequences than this, viz., of the kind of swaraj that India needs.

I have been pressing the matter on the attention of the general public, on that of the Congress Committees of all grades (from the Banaras local to the all-India) and on that of the individual leaders, for the last three years, in season and out of season. I have been pursuing you with letters and printed papers on the subject practically up to the moment of your arrest, and, again since you came out. I must not repeat here what I have said over and over again elsewhere. My hopes were greatly aroused, for a brief while, in the beginning of 1923, that the subject would meet with the consideration it deserved, when a leader of such note as Deshbandhu Das interested himself in it, for some time. But that 'brief while' was over, very soon. And I have been

gradually settling down to the belief that "the time is not ripe" for the discussion of the subject.

But my eyes happened to light upon the two very significant *ifs* in your article, and I was galvanized into this present further effort.

Some of us will feel profoundly grateful if you will very kindly say something, in *Young India*, on this subject—so near to the heart of these "some of us"—something which may shoot a gleam of light through the gloom of our despair.

I am, etc.,
BHAGWAN DAS

Young India, 8-5-1924

APPENDIX II

SWARAJISTS' STATEMENT ON COUNCIL-ENTRY[1]

May 22, 1924

We are obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the trouble he has taken to discuss with us the various points involved in the question of Council-entry and are indebted to his courtesy for the opportunity we have had of seeing an advance copy of the statement he has issued to the Press. The views expressed by him in the course of conversation and those embodied in the Press statement have all been considered by us with care and attention due to his great personality, but with all the reverence we entertain for him and his opinions, we remain unconvinced by his reasoning.

We regret we have not been able to convince Mahatma Gandhi of the soundness of the Swarajist position regarding Council-entry. We fail to understand how such entry can be regarded as inconsistent with the doctrine of the Non-co-operation resolution of the Nagpur Congress.

But if non-co-operation is more a matter of mental attitude than of the application of a living principle to the existing facts of our national life with special reference to the varying attitudes of the bureaucratic Government which rules that life, we conceive it to be our duty to sacrifice even non-co-operation to serve the real interests of the country.

In our view this principle includes self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to the bureaucracy as it impedes our progress towards swaraj. We are, however, anxious to end this fruitless verbal discussion making it clear, however, that Council-entry is and can be thoroughly consistent with the principle of non-co-operation as we understand that principle to be.

[1] This was issued jointly by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru on behalf of the Swaraj Party.

We desire further to make it clear that we have not used in our programme the word 'obstruction' in the technical sense of English Parliamentary history. Obstruction in that sense is impossible in subordinate and limited Legislative bodies, such as the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislatures under the Reforms Act undoubtedly are. Possibly another word should have been found to convey our meaning. We may state, however, that our position is really not so much of obstruction in the Parliamentary sense as that of resistance to the obstruction placed in our path to swaraj by the bureaucratic Government. It is this resistance which we meant to imply when we used the word obstruction. This was clearly indicated in the way we defined and described non-co-operation in the preamble to the constitution of the Swaraj Party. It is the removal of such bureaucratic obstruction which we feel we must emphasize. This is the policy which we have hitherto followed in the Legislative bodies and it is this policy which must in future be more and more effectively directed to the varying needs and problems of our national life.

Here again we are anxious to end all verbal discussion as to whether this can be aptly described as a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction". We are content to detail our policy and then leave it to our friends to give it a more appropriate name, should they so desire.

In the light of this principle and policy, we would here state our future programme of action within and outside the Legislative bodies.

Within the Legislative bodies we must continue:

(1) To throw out budgets unless and until the system of Government is altered in recognition of our rights or as a matter of settlement between the Parliament and the people of this country. In justification of this step, all that we need point out are a few salient facts connected with the budget in the Central Government, which are more or less true of Provincial budgets also. Out of a total of 131 crores (excluding Railways), only 16 crores are votable. Further, out of the non-votable amount, as much as 67 crores, i.e., more than half the amount of the budget, is for military expenditure. It is thus clear that the people of this country have a right to vote only on less than one-eighth of the total amount of the budget, and even the exercise of this limited right is subject to the power of restoration in the Governor-General.[1] It is, therefore, clear that the people have neither any voice in the framing of the budget nor any control over those who frame it. They have no power either over the raising of the revenue or its expenditure. On what principle then, may we ask, is it our duty to pass such a budget and take the responsibility of being a party to it? We have no doubt the support of many self-respecting

[1] Section 67-A of the Government of India Act empowered the Governor-General-in-Council to restore cuts if that course was considered necessary.

men in the country in holding, as we do, that it is our clear duty to throw out such budget in all Legislative bodies, unless and until this vicious system is changed.

(2) To throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its power. It is conceivable that some good may incidentally result from a few of such measures but we are clearly of opinion that in the larger interests of the country it is better to temporarily sacrifice such little benefits rather than add an iota to the powers of the bureaucracy which are already irresistible.

(3) To introduce all resolutions, measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of our national life and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy. We heartily accept the suggestion made by Mahatma Gandhi in his statement and we think that the resolutions mentioned by him in support of the constructive programme of the Congress should certainly be accepted by the Swaraj Party. The principle of self-reliance and resistance to the bureaucratic obstruction, upon which we have hitherto acted, calls for their adoption, and if the constructive work of the Congress comes within the principle of non-co-operation, no less do these resolutions although they represent constructive activity within the Legislative bodies.

(4) To follow a definite economic policy based on the same principle to prevent the drain of public wealth from India by checking all activities leading to exploitation.

To make this policy effective we should take and occupy every place which is open to the members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures by election. In our opinion, we should not only fill elective posts, but serve on every committee when it is possible to invite the attention of the members of our party to this important question and we call upon them to decide this matter as soon as possible.

Our policy outside the Legislative bodies should be as follows:

In the first place, we should give our whole-hearted support to the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi and work that programme unitedly through the Congress organizations. We are decidedly of opinion that our Council work must necessarily lose much of its strength without the backing of the outside constructive work; for it is not inside but outside the legislatures that we must look for the sanction without which the effective carrying out of our Council policy is impossible. Indeed, in the matter of constructive work, the mutual support of both inside and outside activity must, in our opinion, give strength to the very sanction upon which we rely. In this connection, we unhesitatingly accept the suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi regarding civil disobedience. We can assure him that the moment we find that it is impossible to meet the selfish obstinacy of the bureaucracy without civil disobedience, we will retire from the Legislative bodies and help him to prepare the country for such civil disobedience, if by that time the country has not

already become prepared, and we will then unreservedly place ourselves under his guidance and work through the Congress organization under his banner in order that we may unitedly work out a substantial programme of civil disobedience.

In the second place, we must supplement the work of the Congress by helping labour and peasant organizations throughout the country. The problem of labour is always a difficult problem to solve in every country, but in India the difficulties are greater. On the one hand we must find out a way of organization by which we can prevent exploitation of labour by capitalists or by landlords, but on the other hand we must be on our guard to see that those very organizations may not themselves be the source of oppression by nursing extravagant and unreasonable demands. Labour undoubtedly requires protection, but so do industrial enterprises. Our organization must protect both from exploitation and the Trade Union Congress must be so organized as to be able to serve this useful purpose. We hold that in the long run the real interests of both and the country at large are identical.

We feel happy that we have had this opportunity of putting our views before the country side by side with Mahatma Gandhi's opinion, for we feel certain that the perusal will make it obvious that, notwithstanding some differences of view, there is an abiding and fundamental unity amongst both parties of the Indian National Congress. Both parties feel the necessity of working the constructive programme whether within or outside the Legislative bodies. In this direction, we feel confident, lies the germ of a fruitful alliance between Mahatma Gandhi and the Swaraj Party. Our joint effort in the same or different directions will furnish a fitting answer to the bureaucracy unwilling to recognize the rights and liberty of the Indian people, and we emphatically assert that, in our determination to work with the same object in the same or different spheres is expressed the determination of the Indian nation to bring the struggle for swaraj to a successful issue.

The Voice of Freedom, pp. 519-23

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM BHAGWAN DAS

BANARAS,
June 5, 1924

TO THE EDITOR, *Young India*

DEAR SIR,

I have read, as many thousands of others must have read, with anxious care and deep attention, your weighty pronouncement on "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure", in *Young India* for 29-5-1924. The many fairly well-known (but not equally well-*realized*) truths which it puts plainly, frankly, freely, in admirable language, will now be brought home to millions (through translations), by the authority of your profoundly trusted sincerity, as they were not before. Yet it seems to me that a deeper diagnosis of the Cause and a more radical prescription for the Cure are needed. I, therefore, in compliance with your own footnote, submit a few questions with respect to some of your statements, in the hope of further elucidation.

(1) You say, at p. 176[1]: "My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward." Is it really always and everywhere so, as a rule? If always so, or only sometimes so, *why* is it so?

Without the full answer to these questions, the mere advice to the Hindus to be brave, either non-violently, or violently, will remain ineffectual.

Are the Mussalmans and the Hindus of India two different *races*, two different ethnic stocks? Most patently not. Ninety-nine per cent of the Mussalmans are descended from Hindu ancestors or are recent converts in their own persons.

Is the record of the Hindu soldiers, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Dogras, Rajputs, Jats, Baiswaras, Mahrattas, Ahirs, Nayars, Telingas, of even the non-combatant stretcher-bearer Kahars, worse than that of any Mussalman soldiers, or any Christian soldiers, European or any other? Undisputedly not, again.

How then are we to interpret your statement that "in the majority of quarrels, the Hindus come out second best"? If by quarrels we understand the 'religious' Hindu-Muslim riots and individual fights in India, then, and then only, your statement becomes entirely correct, is it not? Your subsequent sentence makes this perfectly plain: "I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling." Now *why* is it that, when there is no difference of race or ancestry between them, when there

[1] The page numbers cited are those of *Young India*.

is no *inherent* bravery (or bullyness, which is a very different thing) in the one or *inherent* cowardice in the other—*why* is it that the Hindu behaves as a coward in these petty quarrels and rowdinesses, and tempts and evokes the bravery or the bullyness in the Mussalman?

Is it something in the present condition of the two *religions* as such which makes the Hindu such a coward and the Mussalman such a "brave"? Can it be this miserable "touch-me-not" business, this awful hypocrisy of self-centred selfishness and conceited and sanctimonious self-righteousness born of the notion of *hereditary* superior and inferior castes—which, *killing all mutual sympathy*, prevents Hindu from helping Hindu in such quarrels, and therefore *makes* each one a coward, because of the sense of helplessness, while the Mussalman's democratic religion ensures him help and *makes* him "brave"?

It is not only the so-called depressed classes that are untouchables; all the castes and sub-castes and sub-sub-castes of Hindus are *all mutually* untouchables, more or less, in this, that or the other respect! A religion which has come to this pass of mutual touch-me-not and therefore antipathy and distrust must necessarily breed cowards who must necessarily be eaten up by the "braves" whom they must necessarily bring into being by providing the temptation. Islam, also, degenerate as it is today, is yet distinctly better in some respects than the degenerate Hinduism of today. If it had only less slaughter and more philosophy, it would be as good as any of the higher forms of Hinduism, and far better than most of the lower ones.

(2) At p. 183 you say, "If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy. . . . The Hindus . . . must shed timidity or cowardice." Please tell the Hindus more plainly *how* they should set their house in order, *how* shed their cowardice. Is not the canker at the heart of Hinduism-in-practice today the *root cause* of its degeneration, this very same mutual "touch-me-not" business? Several Banaras pundits *refused* to sign a *vyarastha* (*fatwa*) sanctioning the reconversion to Hinduism of the Malabar Hindus alleged to have been forcibly converted to Islam! They had been touched by Islam and been irretrievably lost forever!

If my neighbour has a servant whom I very much want for myself, and if my simply touching him makes him wholly unfit for further service to my neighbour, and so available to me for my service, why should I not touch him? There is every inducement on earth for me to touch him! Why are there no such conflicts between Christians and Muslims, as between Hindus and Muslims? Indeed, the Christians make converts from among Mussalmans as well as Hindus, and yet they arouse no such ire among Mussalmans as the Hindu *shuddhi* and *sangathan* affair has done. Why is it so? As you have justly pointed out, at p. 180, it is *the manner* of the *shuddhi* and the *sangathan* which is the cause of the trouble—the self-display and the drumming and trumpeting. If the Hindus, and especially the Hindu priests, had only a little more sense, more honest common sense, and a little less sanc-

timonious hypocrisy and suicidal cunning, they would simply declare that anybody who chose to call himself a Hindu might do so, and might inter-dine with any other Hindu whose personal habits, in respect of food, and taste and temperament and ways of living were similar, the whole trouble would cease at once. With the provoking abandonment of this *arrogance* of untouchable purity (which yet is so feeble and cowardly that, instead of purifying the less pure by its touch, it itself dies under any other's mere touch) no incentive, *no provocation*, would be left to Mussalmans to *make* converts from Hinduism, willy-nilly. Hindus and Mussalmans would begin to behave as free and friendly human beings to each other. Knowing, or at least feeling, that they were all equally *men*, *human beings* first, and Hindus or Mussalmans afterwards,—*equal men*, equally *free* to put on or put off at will the *label* of Hindu or Muslim or Christian, etc., like clothes, though *bound* to be good and *honest* in their dealings with each other, as brothers, because of the common "Father in Heaven", —they could no longer think of breaking each other's heads over the most trumpery causes.

And the Hindus have no sufficient reason for not making such a declaration. Eating and drinking and marrying are supposed to be main factors in "purity"—as indeed they are, together with clean thinking. In respect of drink, Islam is "purer" than Hinduism, since, in theory, it prohibits intoxicating liquor, which Hinduism does not, strictly, though condemning them. In respect of food, both eat flesh and fish and fowl; only Islam eats the cow and eschews the pig, and Hinduism eats the pig and eschews the cow; while Christianity impartially eats both and drinks liquor also. In respect of marriage, both Hinduism and Islam are, theoretically, and to some extent practically, polygamous. Why then this excessive non-co-operation of "touch-me-not or I die, or at least have to bathe"?

A *plain* and periodically repeated pronouncement from you, dear sir, seems to be very greatly needed by the Hindus, on these matters.

(3) At p. 177 you say, "We sowed the seed and the *goondas* reaped the harvest." *How, in what way* and *why* did we sow the seed? *Why* do the respectables of the two communities continue to behave hypocritically? *Why* do they not try *sincerely* for peace? Inherent, pure, 'sheer cussedness', or because no sufficient endeavour has been made to induce them to *understand each other and the common object of both*?

(4) At p. 177 you say, "Another potent cause of the tension is *the growing distrust* even among the best of us." *Why* is there any distrust, and *why* is it growing? Can it possibly be due to the fact that the meaning of the words swaraj and religion is not clearly understood; that there is no agreement about the meaning of these two very important and interconnected words; that no effort has been made to secure an agreement between all the workers on this essential matter, though there is a lip-profession by all that they all want swaraj and all want God?

(5) At p. 179, you say, "We have to discover points of contact". Do you mean between individuals, as such, in respect of temperament, taste, habits, etc., for establishing individual friendships, or between communities, for social amenities; or between political parties, for political colligation; or between *religions*, for really deep-seated and lasting unions and federations?

(6) At p. 182, you speak of leaving "the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Ajmal Khan" to settle various political matters. Why do you mention his name and no other? Is it not because you know or, at least feel, (as some others of us have felt, that he is a *man first* and a Mussalman *afterwards*; that he is a good and just and philanthropic man and (or rather *because* he is) not 'religion'-ridden man. Supposing he is incapacitated—which God forbid—could you suggest many other names in place of his? And is there no other, and safer and sounder, way of settling these political matters than this very risky process of entrusting the whole work to one human being, of delicate and frail health, even though he is trusted by both communities in a degree next only to yourself? Is there no way of creating a *body* of such men and women, and of maintaining its numbers at a reasonable figure, by constant recruitment —the People's Parliament, their Legislative Assembly, their Court of Arbitration, their Supreme All-India Panchayat?

(7) At p. 182, you say, "Hindu-Muslim Unity means swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart-unity between Hindus and Mussalmans of India." *And everybody else says it too.* But how may we bring about this unity? By simply telling the two communities: unite; unite; don't quarrel; don't quarrel; don't object, the one to cow-slaughter, the other to music? Why is it that, despite endless admonitions to this effect, they decline to unite, and continue to quarrel and to object—indeed, worse now than before? Do you not think it would be much more effectual to proclaim the "points of contact", or rather the "points *common* between all religions", more specifically, and deligently, and repeatedly?

I remain, dear sir,
Yours sincerely,
BHAGWAN DAS

Young India, 19-6-1924

APPENDIX IV

MOTILAL NEHRU'S LETTERS

(A)

"SOONITA",
RIDGE ROAD,
MALABAR HILL,
July 25, 1924

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I enclose a copy of the questions I handed to Maulana Mahomed Ali on his recent visit to Allahabad for favour of written replies. He was putting up with us and was in Allahabad for a whole day after the questions were handed to him. When he was leaving I reminded him of them, but he only said that there was some misapprehension and referred me to Maulvi Rafi Ahmad for further information. This gentleman was standing by and he at once protested his ignorance, but the Maulana made some humorous remark and left immediately after. I then asked Jawaharlal if he knew whether the Maulana Saheb intended to answer the questions at all—he said he could not say. There is, of course, no objection of the Maulana Saheb to answer these or any other questions, but in the absence of clear replies, I am left to draw my own inferences which may or may not be correct.

I may mention that the facts referred to in Qs. 3 & 4 have been established to my satisfaction by reliable evidence. I should like very much to know what you think of them. If I could have your views on the remaining questions also, it would greatly help me in shaping my own course of action.

I shall be in Bombay for four or five days. Will you kindly let me know when you are arriving here?

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
MOTILAL NEHRU

Questions submitted by Pandit Motilal Nehru to Maulana Mahomed Ali, President of the Indian National Congress, for favour of answers.[1]

Questions:

1. Is it your interpretation of the resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee at its last meeting held at Ahmedabad, read with the relevant resolutions passed by the Congress at Delhi and Cocanada, that it is open to No-changers to carry on active propaganda in the country against Council-entry?

[1] In the *questionnaire* supplied to him, Gandhiji put down his answers to Questions 1,2,5,6 and 7.

2. If so, do you agree that it is equally open to Swarajists to carry on counter-propaganda?
3. Is it true that you and Maulana Shaukat Ali have already begun active propaganda against Council-entry and have actually tried at Lucknow to use your influence to persuade Swarajist members of Legislative Councils to come out?
4. Is it true that either you or Maulana Shaukat Ali or both have put it to the Swarajists and other Congressmen that the issue was whether they would accept Mahatma Gandhi or Pandit Motilal Nehru as their leaders?
5. Are you working to secure a majority to obtain a verdict of the forthcoming Congress

   (i) generally in favour of any resolutions which Mahatma Gandhi may wish to submit to the Congress?

   (ii) specially

   (a) to rescind the compromise resolutions passed at the Delhi and Cocanada Sessions relating to Council-entry

   (b) to re-introduce the penalty clause in the resolution relating to hand-spinning passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Ahmedabad, and

   (c) to exclude all Swarajists from membership of the All-India Congress Committee and the various Provincial, District and Tahsil Congress Committees.
6. If your answer to any part of the preceding question is in the affirmative, do you agree that it is open to Swarajists to carry on counter-propaganda?
7. (a) Do you agree that the All-India Congress Committee and the various Provincial, District and Tahsil Committees though loosely described as the executive of the Congress are really deliberative bodies consisting of hundreds of members and that each has a small council of its own to transact purely executive business?

   (b) If so, is it the intention to exclude Swarajists from the pure executive only in the Central and Provincial Organizations or also from the larger deliberative bodies mentioned above?

Handed to Maulana Mahomed Ali at Allahabad on 18-7-1924.

M. L. N.

From a photostat of a typewritten copy: S.N. 9002

(B)

"SOONITA",
RIDGE ROAD,
MALABAR HILL,
July 28, 1924

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

Thanks for your letter answering some of the questions I put to Maulana Mahomed Ali.

After I sent you my last letter enclosing a copy of the questions, I read in the papers that you had lost considerable weight and were suffering from headache and occasional fever. Please pardon me for troubling you with the questions in your present state of health. I would not have done so had I seen the papers before writing.

I am now getting very anxious about your health. The most obvious thing to do is to stop all work at once and take complete rest. But the misfortune is that you will not do this. All great men have their weaknesses and sometimes they are more than those of ordinary men. Specially in matters concerning the care of their own persons. You recognize the fact that you are not physically fit for the work you have undertaken and yet will not do the one thing which everybody including yourself knows has to be done to restore you to your normal state of health! I do not know any name for that other than national misfortune.

I shall be perfectly fran with you even at the risk of offending you. Let me tell you plainly that the kind of work you are doing at present can very well wait and that the nation will not be in the least poorer if it is not done at all and if in its place we have our Gandhi restored to health and vigour at the end of say a month or even two months. I should cut you off from all communication with India for a time and send you out in the open sea for a fairly long cruise without any land being in sight for six weeks. The least that you can do is to take a trip to see Ceylon where you will have an entire change of surroundings. Your dak should await you at the Ashram during your absence. But it is useless to go on writing in this strain. I am afraid I can make no impression on you and there is nothing for us but to resign ourselves to whatever the future has in store for us. I have however made up my mind about one thing and that is that I will not be a *particeps criminis* in the suicide you are committing by troubling you with any further correspondence or talk about any work however urgent it may be until you have very considerably improved your health.

Your postcard[1] must be awaiting my return to Allahabad. I am going back day after tomorrow night. I should have run up to Sabarmati for a day

[1] This is not available.

if I thought I could be of any use whatever. But I expect no good to come out of my visit and have therefore given up the idea. Let me however ask you a question. Would you put me down as mad if I were to ask you to spend a few weeks on the bank of the Ganges some five miles out of Allahabad at a garden house belonging to a friend of mine which is at my entire disposal? This is the only alternative to your going out to sea that I can think of for the benefit of your health.

Yours sincerely,
MOTILAL NEHRU

From a photostat of a handwritten copy: S.N. 9004

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(*The*) *Story of My Life*, Vol. II: M. R. Jayakar, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 959.

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The Voice of Freedom: Ed. K. M. Panikkar and A. Pershad.

Young India (1918-1931): English weekly founded by Jamnadas Dwarkadas at Bombay; from May 7, 1919, published bi-weekly under Gandhiji's supervision; from October 1919, issued as a weekly from Ahmedabad with Gandhiji as Editor.

CHRONOLOGY

(May 8, 1924 — August 15, 1924)

May 16: Gandhiji had discussions with representatives of Vykom Satyagraha Committee.

May 17: Discussions on Vykom satyagraha continued.
Gandhiji gave interview to *The Hindu* on Vykom satyagraha Council-entry.

May 18: In first public appearance after release from jail, presided over Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Bombay.

May 20: Discussions with Vykom Satyagraha Committee representatives concluded.

May 22: Gandhiji and Swaraj Party leaders issued separate statements on Council-entry.

May 28: Gandhiji left Bombay for Ahmedabad.

May 29: Returned to Satyagraha Ashram after absence of 26 months.
Young India article analysed Hindu-Muslim tension: its cause and cure.

May 30: Gandhiji gave interview to *Swatantrya* of Nagpur on Hindu-Muslim question.

May 31: Gave interview to Associated Press of India.

June 3: In interview to *Swatantrya*, dwelt on code of non-violence and communal disputes in Nagpur.

June 5: In interview to *The Times of India*, expressed his view of Bengal Provincial Conference's resolution on Gopinath Saha.
Sir Michael O'Dwyer awarded damages with costs, in O'Dwyer-Nair case.

June 8: Gandhiji gave interview to *The Hindu*, on Swarajists' programme, Hindu-Muslim tension, and impending A.I.C.C. session.

June 10: Delivered annual address at Gujarat Vidyapith.

June 11: Sent message to Saurashtra Rajput Conference.

June 19: Published in *Young India* four resolutions which he proposed to move at A.I.C.C. meeting.

June 24: Gave interview to Associated Press of India.

June 27: Moved first of his four resolutions at A.I.C.C. session at Ahmedabad.

June 28: Addressed A.I.C.C. on the second day of its session.

June 29: Moved his second and third resolutions at A.I.C.C.

June 30: Spoke at informal meeting, after conclusion of A.I.C.C. session.

July 1: Conveyed his impressions of A.I.C.C. in interview to Associated Press of India.

July 3: Made in *Young India* retrospective study of A.I.C.C. proceedings.

July 11: Addressed Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee.

July 13: Communal riots reported from Nagpur.

July 15: Communal riots broke out in Delhi.
Sarojini Naidu called on Gandhiji at Sabarmati.

July 17: *Young India* article gave analysis of 'an appeal to the nation' issued by D. C. Chatterji and others.

End of July: Devastating floods in Malabar.

August 1: Gandhiji presided over Ahmedabad Conference of Teachers of National Schools in Gujarat.

August 2: Addressed Conference on resolutions before it.

August 7: Gave interview to Associated Press of India on criticism of his attitude to Malabar flood-relief.

August 8: Spoke at Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad.

August 9: Wrote to Motilal Nehru regarding the choice of Congress president at the next session of the A.I.C.C.

August 12: Hasrat Mohani released from jail.

August 14: In *Young India* article, Gandhiji argued against compulsory education.

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